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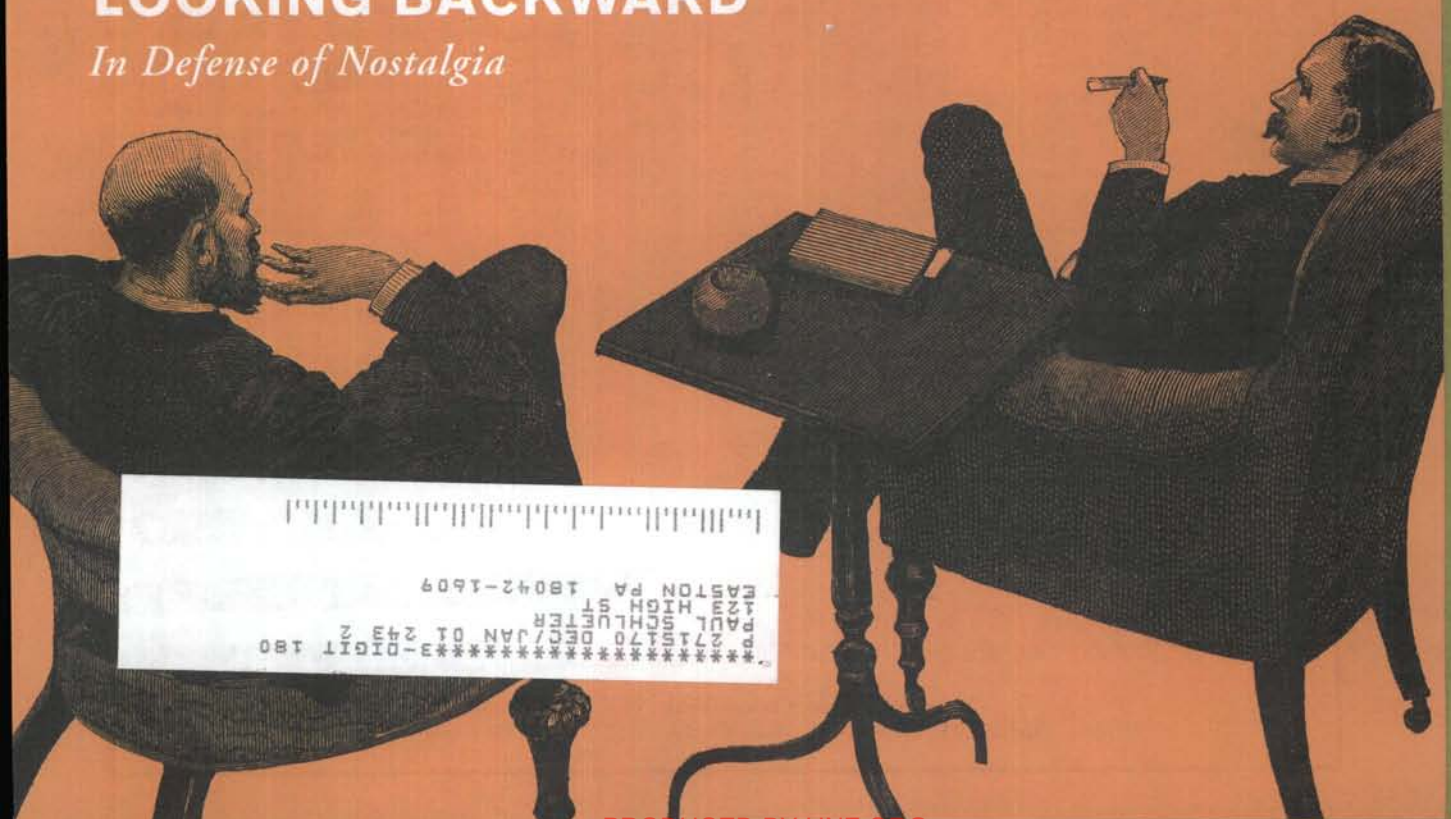

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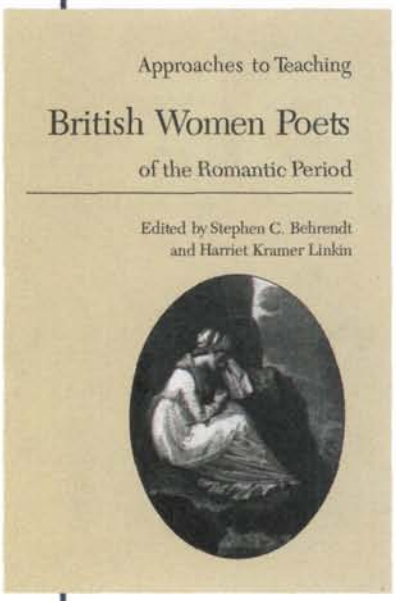
*A new volume in the Approaches to Teaching World Literature series*


Approaches to Teaching
British Women Poets
of the Romantic Period
Edited by Stephen C. Behrendt and Harriet Kramer Linkin

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*Stephen C. Behrendt and Harriet Kramer Linkin, eds.*

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Catherine B. Burroughs
Kay K. Cook
Stuart Curran
Glenn T. Dibert-Himes
Julie Ellison
Mary A. Favret
Elizabeth Fay
Paula R. Feldman
Joel Haefner
Madeleine Kahn
Deborah Kennedy
Jane King
Greg Kucich
Becky Lewis
Kari Lokke
Anne K. Mellor
Judith Pascoe
Alan Richardson
Donelle R. Ruwe
Scott Simpkins
Nanora Sweet
Carol Shiner Wilson
Susan J. Wolfson
Sarah M. Zimmerman

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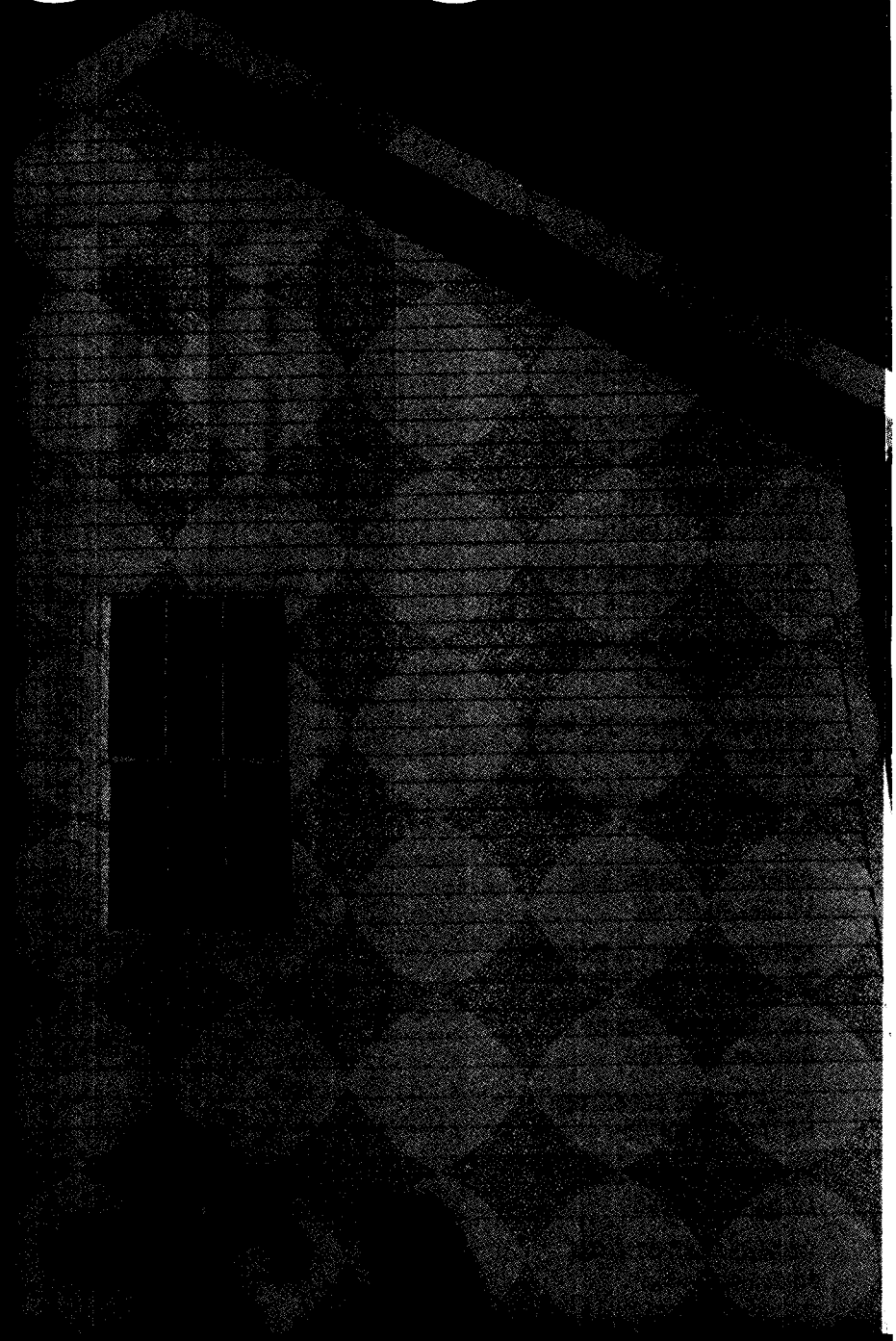

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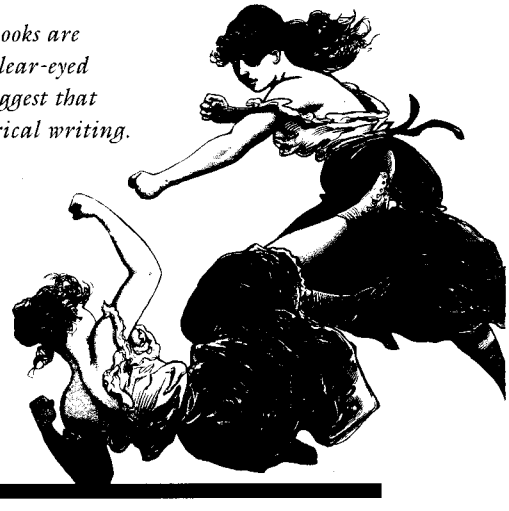


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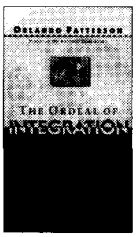


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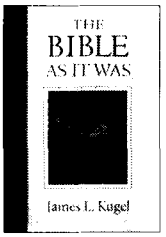


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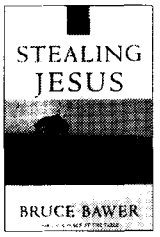


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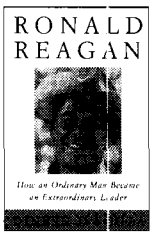


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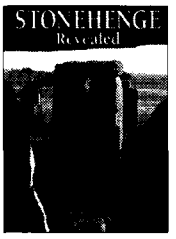


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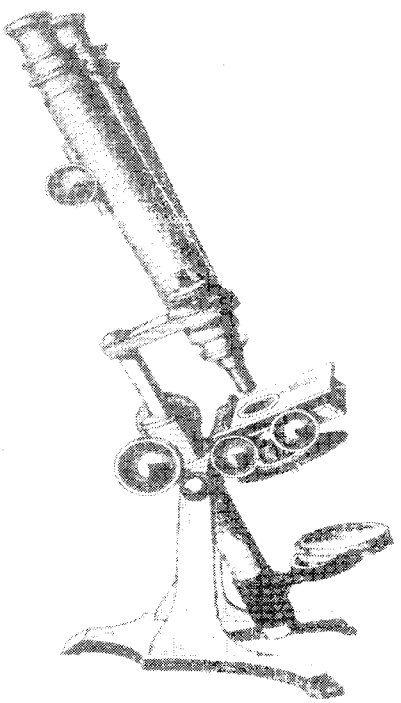

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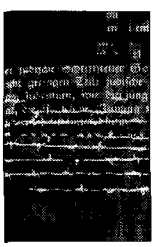

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# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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## QUEER AND PRESENT DANGER?

Caleb Crain's admirably evenhanded account of the current battle between queer theorists and gay journalists left me feeling both angry and dejected ["Pleasure Principles," October]. Each camp seems as promising a candidate for leadership in the realm of queer thought as Regan or Goneril does in the lands of King Lear. And yet I find myself—a gay man and graduate student in literature—uncomfortably drifting toward the journalists, if only because it is ultimately impossible for me to indulge in Foucault's great erotic beautiful lie (one uncritically endorsed by Sex Panic) that we can, and should, go back to bodies and pleasure, as if we could disentangle sex from all the forces that intersect with it.

Granted, the notion that New Yorkers would permit a new zoning law to "close an estimated 85 percent of [the city's] 175 adult businesses" is almost terrifyingly intrusive enough to transform me into a Foucauldian. As Sex Panic realizes, the domineering attempt of sanctioned powers to regulate sex has wide-ranging implications, and not just for homosexuals.

And yet, I am perhaps more disturbed by Sex Panic's idealization of the culture of sex clubs and anonymous sex to the exclusion of other kinds of sexual—dare I say romantic?—experiences. Sex and the desire to have it constantly (and randomly) may be fundamental human drives, but so is the desire for intimacy and sustained companionship. Anonymous sex may indeed be, as Michael Warner asserts, "transformative," "world making," and fueled by "utopian longing." But even as keenly intelligent a theorist as Warner seems unwilling to acknowledge that some of us feel deeply alienated by the inherent impersonality of sex-club culture. It is dishearteningly clear to me that queer theory's most attractive characteristic—its blending of distinct, even dissonant voices—may no longer exist.

**DAVID GREVEN**
**SOMERVILLE, MA**

Crain imputes to "ivory tower" queer theorists a total disregard for "community norms" and "ethics" while implying that gay journalists actually speak for "the lesbian and gay community." However, Crain never stops to notice that Signorile and Rotello's "community" might really consist of a mere market segment buying magazines. Meanwhile, Sex Panic is addressing issues of concern to New York City—especially to constituencies whose interests are not represented by the lesbian and gay press. Many, if not most, queer academics involved in Sex Panic live, work, and have friends and lovers in New York. Their activism is very much about community, whereas Signorile and Rotello are merely attempting to sell their books.

Folks like Signorile and Rotello seem to consider the communities associated with Sex Panic too unsavory for words. Sound familiar? It should to anyone who knows anything about pre-Stonewall U.S. history. Shame and blame are much more the critical provenance of gay journalists than of queer theorists. Sex Panic works against the very dangerous notion that we have to purge our ranks not only to gain acceptance but also to survive.

**ERIC CLARKE**
**ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH**
**UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH**

## IQ TEST

The developers of the Doomsday Argument are probably working under the assumption that their intelligence is at the top end of the human range ["Hypotheses," October]. However, it's statistically unlikely that any random individual's intelligence will be at the top of the population's range; therefore, I feel justified in assuming that their actual intelligence is only about average. In fact, a little below average.

**RICHARD COHEN**
**AUSTIN, TX**

## KIDDING AROUND

Maybe this has happened to you: At a party, somebody starts telling a joke, one of those worn-out chestnuts that circulate endlessly at gatherings where nobody knows anybody very well. Everyone is listening quietly and tolerantly, preparing to laugh politely, when one spoilsport pipes up with "No, no, no! You've got it all wrong. That's not how it goes at all." The joke teller tries to ignore the remark and goes on telling his joke—but the spoilsport will not be satisfied, and an argument ensues. The party is ruined.

That's what's been happening in the academy between Hans Walter Gabler (jokester) and John Kidd (spoilsport). Like every joke, *Ulysses* has its variants, which are told over and over again by academics, each convinced that his telling is the best. We the audience have been robbed of the denouement; we're left hanging without our rightful catharsis because everyone has forgotten the punch line.

Maybe Robin Bates's enlightening and humorous article "The Corrections Officer" [October] will make it obvious how funny the original joke would be if anyone would let anyone else finish telling it. What I am saying is simply that *Ulysses* is funny and should be enjoyable to read. The scholarly debates about it are funny, too, but in ways sadly incommensurable with the wit of the book itself.

Someday in the distant future, a tipsy associate professor will nudge his colleague at a cocktail party and murmur, "Hey, did you hear the one about Stately, the plump Buck Mulligan?"

**continued on page 68**



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# Field Notes

## AUSTEN TOWERS

IN 1994, A WEALTHY AMERican entrepreneur named Sandy Lerner acquired a 125-year lease on Chawton House, the Hampshire manor just up the road from the cottage where Jane Austen lived and wrote during the last eight years of her life. Lerner's plan was to turn the dilapidated fifty-room house into a research center devoted to early women writers. First, she would build a collection of novels written by Austen's female predecessors and peers. Then, she would install the books at Chawton House and allow scholars to come and immerse themselves in an environment that—with painstaking exactitude—would approximate Regency era living conditions. Four years later, however, restoration of the house has yet to begin, and some parts of Lerner's plan may never be realized.

The plot to derail the Chawton House project has all the conniving and nastiness of, well, an Austen novel. That is, if you imagine the house itself as the male love object (Mr. Darcy, say) and a handful of disgruntled locals as his jealous companion (think Miss Bingley), hell-bent on preventing the heroine (an upstart outsider) from catching the prize. In this last role, Lerner appears almost typecast. Like Elizabeth Bennet arriving at Netherfield Park in mud-stained petticoats, Lerner—with her loud nail polish and waist-length magenta hair—evidently made a rather alarming impression on the residents of Chawton Village (pop. 310).

A forty-two-year-old Californian with an affinity for early British literature and a reputation for brashness, Lerner made her fortune in Silicon Valley in the 1980s and has spent the last decade dispersing it to causes she feels passionate about. Besides Jane Austen, her hobbies run from music (audio engineering) to makeup. In 1996 she launched Urban Decay, a cosmetics company for grunge girls whose slogan, "Does Pink Make You Puke?" sums up its attitude-laden approach to body decoration. (Her celebrated nail-polish line features colors like Storm Drain, Asphyxia, and Gash.) But Lerner's interest in Austen dates back further, to her days at Stanford University, when she turned to *Pride and Prejudice* for relief from her graduate studies in economics. She has read all of Austen's work so many times, she says, that she has "much of it memorized." When she learned of the sorry state of Chawton House, she quickly intervened. (Happily, the cottage where Austen actually resided has been restored and is now a museum.)

As the news of Lerner's acquisition spread, so did the rumors, eagerly pounced on by the British press: The house was to become an English branch of Euro Disney—or worse, a lesbian commune. Opposition to the restoration reached its peak over the fate of a set of badgers living in an abandoned swimming pool on the estate. Badgers are a protected species in Britain, and when word got out that Lerner's team planned to destroy the pool—a 1930s addition to the Chawton grounds—the local badger-rights society was called in to raise a ruckus. "The badgers and the swimming-pool problem delayed us a year," says Susan Maher, the center's director. There have been headaches over easements and access routes as well. The British, Lerner speculates, simply hate change. "We've had to drop a major part of the plan," she says, "due to resistance from the neighbors." Given the project's more unusual features, that might not be such a bad thing. Lerner hoped to evoke the eighteenth century with almost disquieting fidelity: "You know, when you read 'I went to bed' in one of these early novels, it means something totally different than it does today—your beds might have been straw, rats were running around, your whole family may have been sleeping beside you. I wanted to get as far as you could toward re-

JANE AUSTEN

SANDY LERNER

NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY (LEFT) AP/WIDE WORLD PHOTOS (RIGHT)



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creating the time period."

Now, it appears, scholars will neither reside at the center nor read Fanny Burney by candlelight—as Lerner originally hoped they would. Tentatively scheduled to open in four years, the center promises other unique offerings, chief among them access to what may be the world's largest collection of novels written by women between 1600 and 1830.

"One of the biggest fallacies in English literature today is that Jane Austen came out of nowhere," says Katherine Moulton, the librarian for the collection. "In fact," she says, "Austen was preceded by dozens of good women writers." Until recently, such an assertion would have been based more on theory than fact. But Moulton has evidence to prove it: Thirty-three boxes of now mostly forgotten early novels sit in her temporary office in Mountain View, California, awaiting repatriation to England; several thousand more are locked in a warehouse nearby.

The Chawton collection will include the work of women like Lady Mary Wroath (1586?–1651?), a penniless young widow and mother who in 1621, to stave off her creditors, published *Urania,* a pastoral romance, beating Aphra Behn to the printers by fifty-five years. Then there's Eliza Haywood (1693–1756), to whom sixty-seven literary works—as well as two children—are attributed. Austen, English literature's most famous maiden aunt, turns out to be the exception, not the rule. Her literary predecessors were not only numerous but typically wives and mothers, too.

With five thousand titles, the Chawton House Library already far surpasses its academic counterparts in terms of sheer numbers. (Brown's Women Writers Project, for example, an electronic textbase of work by women in English before 1830, offers a mere two hundred titles.) And the holdings are expected to more than double in size—an extraordinary prediction given that by rights, the combination of gender, genre, and time period that define the collection should function as a triple handicap. Since 1757 British law has required a copy of every published book to be deposited in the National Library. But, according to Isobel Grundy, director of Chawton House Library and a professor of English at the University of Alberta in Edmonton, the prejudice against novels, which represented the bulk of women's early literary endeavors, was such that librarians tended to ignore the rule. "Many of these books are simply lost," concurs Lerner. "Women had to pay to have them published, and they often appeared on crappy paper to be circulated only among themselves."

In September, the library celebrated its biggest coup yet when it acquired the Hardy collection, a Scottish doctor's personal trove of 826 novels, all published before 1830. Among its highlights is the only known copy of William Godwin's novel *Damon and Delia.* (It will be admitted to Chawton House by virtue of Godwin's relationship with eighteenth-century feminist philosopher Mary Wollstonecraft.) Godwin's book will join such valuable pieces as the only complete surviving handwritten Austen manuscript—a satirical novella titled *Sir Charles Grandison,* after the novel by Richardson—and a complete set of *The Female Spectator* (1744–1746), a monthly periodical edited (and perhaps entirely written) by Eliza Haywood. Then there are the more mysterious finds, such as *The Castle of Tinmouth* (1806) by the virtually unknown Jane Harvey. "It sounds like a stereotypical Gothic novel," says Grundy, "but like a lot of these women novelists, Harvey seems to be an intelligent critic of society. The book is set in the late Middle Ages and deals with a woman who is slightly liberated and ahead of her time. She is accused of witchcraft, threatened with being burned alive, and finally saved."

Mr. Darcy, who complained of knowing only a half dozen accomplished women, must have led a sheltered life indeed.

**EMILY EAKIN**

FIVE YEARS AGO, A COALITION OF Native Americans filed a lawsuit in an effort to strip trademark protection from the Washington Redskins' team name. Explained one activist at the time: "There are no Blackskins, Yellowskins, or Whiteskins. It's demeaning and makes us second-class citizens. Human beings shouldn't be classified by the color of their skin." Although it's understandable why American Indians should feel insulted—imagine the uproar a name like the New York Yids or the Detroit Coloreds would provoke—it's interesting to note that some of their ancestors may have held a different opinion about being identified as red skinned—at least in politics, if not on the playing field. Consider, for instance, Cherokee chief Old Tassel's stern admonishment to U.S. commissioners at the 1785 treaty council at



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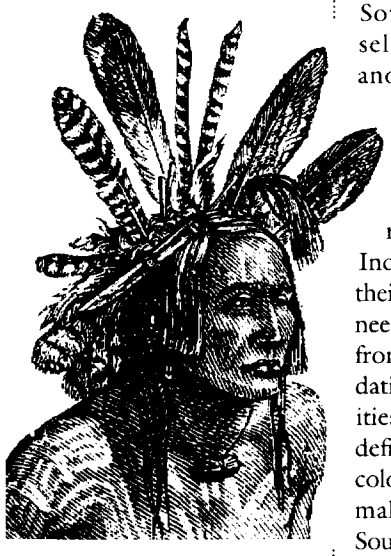
Hopewell: "You must know the red people are the aborigines of this land, and that it is but a few years since the white people found it."

Old Tassel's speech is just one of many vivid illustrations of Indian color consciousness in Nancy Shoemaker's fascinating article, "How Indians Got to Be Red," which appeared in the June issue of *The American Historical Review*. According to Shoemaker, a historian at the University of Wisconsin, Eau Claire, eighteenth-century Indians in the Southeast unabashedly referred to themselves as red—and at their own initiative—when conducting diplomatic relations with European colonists.

If Shoemaker is right and Indians took the lead in defining themselves as red, historians may be forced to reexamine their most basic assumptions about how racial categories arise. It is often glibly asserted that imperialistic Europeans devised the notion of race in order to justify their domination of non-Europeans. As Shoemaker remarks, "Scholars working on the history of race as an idea assume that Europeans were the sole inventors of it."

An extreme formulation, but one that is richly borne out by a glance at the standard explanations of how Indians came to be known as red. In *The Beothucks or Red Indians: The Original Inhabitants of Newfoundland* (1915), James P. Howley popularized the idea, long since discredited, that early explorers took to calling Indians red because they wore red paint and that over time this description assumed a racial connotation. In 1982 Alden Vaughan, a historian at Columbia University, traced "red" as a racial category to the 1740 edition of *Systema Naturae* by the Swedish naturalist Carolus Linnaeus. While correcting Howley's mythology, this approach similarly relegated the Indians to what Shoemaker calls "a passive role in the construction of knowledge." In line with past inquiries, Vaughan did not consider what Linnaeus's Indian contemporaries



In the creation myths of such tribes, the color red figured prominently, referring variously to blood, crawfish, or red clay.

might have understood by skin color, or race.

Enter Shoemaker. A specialist in American-Indian history, Shoemaker was pursuing research on the Cherokee Nation court system when she came across numerous examples in which Cherokees identified themselves as a "red people" more than a decade before 1740 in high-level talks with the British. Leafing through the reports of French explorers, she found what looked to be comparable color consciousness among such tribes as the Taensas and the Houmas. By contrast, European travelogues of the period never described Indians as "red," but as "tawny" or "brown." Far from being imposed from above, red stood out as an indigenous assertion of identity.

But why did Indians of the Southeast proclaim themselves a red people when another spot on the spectrum—or a name unconnected to color—might also have served? In slaveholding English territories like the Carolinas, Indians desperate to protect their land and freedom felt the need to distinguish themselves from black slaves. Accommodating themselves to the realities of racial hierarchy, they defined themselves as red—a color that, according to Shoemaker, already "permeated Southeastern Indian cultures." (For example, in the creation myths of such tribes as the Mesquakies, the color red figured prominently, referring variously to blood, crawfish, or to the red clay out of which God was held to have kneaded the first Indians.) Soon enough, Southeastern Indians publicly projected themselves as a red people in diplomatic activities, as they prodded their European partners about the obligations owed to them in war and trade.

In contrast, the Iroquois and other tribes of the Northeast showed no proclivity for the color red. The reason, writes Shoemaker, is that the European colonists there "lagged several decades behind...in self-identifying as 'white.'" Moreover, the resonant juxtaposition of red and white—the conventional color symbols for war and peace in the Southeast—did not exist in Iroquois diplomatic language. (Nor, for that matter, did Northeasterners see much clay or crawfish.)

Scholars of race are sure to challenge Shoemaker's argument that Southeastern Indians helped to create the idea of race. Even if some Indians began to read "meaning into observable bodily differences as a way to find order in an increasingly complicated world"—developing a robust sense of redness along the way—there is little common ground between red-clay creation myths and the pseudo-biological ideology of racial capacities propounded by Europeans. While noting that some Indians differentiated between "Indian" and "Christian" scalps, Shoemaker doesn't present much evidence that Indians thought about race in biological terms. What's more, precisely what red skin meant to Indians remains a frustratingly murky matter. The Cherokee, it turns out, have two words for red: *agigage*, which refers to a natural blood red, and *wodige*, which refers to a reddish-brown pigment used in paint. Since the British translators didn't preserve the distinction, it's not clear whether in calling themselves "red," the Cherokee were invoking skin tone or the splendor of their facial paint.

Shoemaker concedes the point: "Were 'white' and 'red' in European-Indian diplomacy intended as symbols that could be put on and taken off or did they refer to differences thought to be embedded in the body, in skin color? Unfortunately, there is no simple answer." No, there isn't, but thanks to Shoemaker, at least a few of the simple answers to the question "How did the Indians get to be red?" may have been laid to rest.

**ADAM SHATZ**



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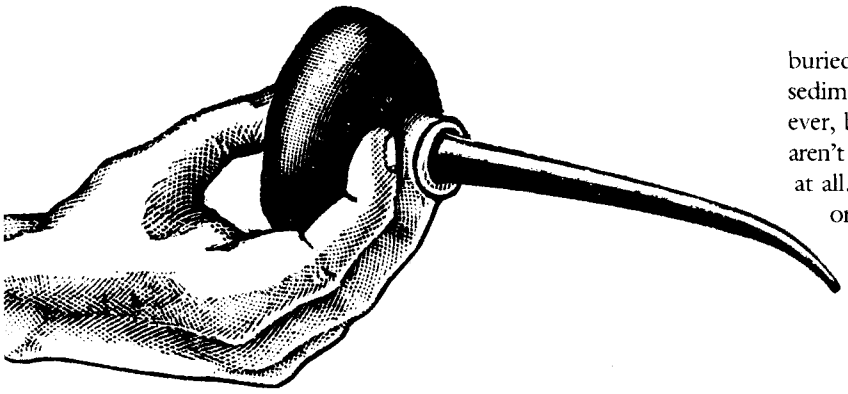


# IT'S A GAS!

WHAT DOES IT TAKE FOR respectable scientists to start suing one another? For Thomas Gold, a Cornell astrophysicist, it took a letter from thirty-four professional geologists demanding that the United States Geological Survey (USGS) withdraw a book containing an article by Gold "from all libraries worldwide." In 1995 Gold responded by suing the author of the letter and some of its signatories for libel. What prompted such vitriol? Petrol—that is, a fierce debate over the origins of petroleum.

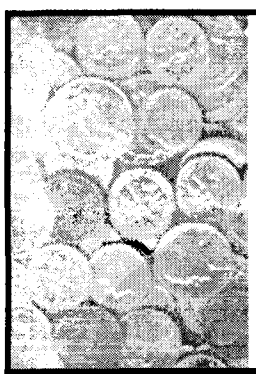
Any geology textbook will tell you that fossil fuels (such as oil and natural gas) are the remnants of ancient organisms, primarily plants and microbes, buried and cooked for eons in sedimentary rock. Gold, however, believes that oil and gas aren't products of organic decay at all. Rather, he traces their origins to gaseous hydrocarbons swirled into the earth's mantle at its formation. These molecules, he believes, constantly creep from the depths of the planet to the surface—pooling along the way in underground reservoirs, forming oil.

This nonbiological, or "abiogenic," theory may sound like a harebrained idea, but Gold, a member of the National Academy of Sciences, is no crackpot. He is an eminent researcher, described even by his enemies as a "genius," whose distinguished career includes helping to describe the magnetosphere (a term he coined) and explaining the nature of pulsars.

In his view, his outsider status allows him to see what geologists cannot. Gold contends that the "biogenic" theory, which has reigned for fifty years, has become so taken for granted that geologists have been blind to evidence contradicting it. "They don't read anything outside their clique," Gold complains.

Geologists, meanwhile, accuse Gold of selectively using data and of straying too far from his scientific speciality. "He simply will not examine carefully the data that people find persuasive," gripes one geologist. "Gold's a very intelligent guy but he's certainly out of his depth."

The abiogenic theory isn't new. It was first propounded in 1877 by Russian chemist Dmitry Mendeleyev, father of

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the periodic table. But the theory fell out of favor in the 1920s. Geologists asked: If petroleum comes from the depths of the earth, rather than from biological debris, how to explain the presence of organic material? This seemed an definitive rebuttal until Gold came along. Drawing on surprising new evidence, he pointed out that heat-loving bacteria have recently been discovered living at sizzling temperatures of up to 113°C. (Until recently, the upper limit was thought to be 85°C.) Such "extremophiles" could conceivably thrive in red-hot oil reservoirs, consuming hydrocarbons as food. This "deep, hot biosphere"—as Gold calls it—may account for the organic molecules found in oil reservoirs. For geologists, fossils explain the fuel; for Gold, the fuel explains the fossils.

The debate shifted from the realm of theory to experiment in 1982, when Gold convinced the Swedish national power company, Vattenfall, to drill for oil and gas. Geologically speaking, Sweden sits on a gigantic chunk of granite, an igneous rock. No one drills for oil in igneous rock because petroleum is thought to be composed of organic material, which is supposedly deposited exclusively in sedimentary rock. If Gold found petroleum in Sweden, it would both falsify the biogenic thesis and revolutionize the energy business, prompting a mad rush for oil in places geologists had never before considered looking.

The first well, drilled in 1986, yielded twelve tons of oily black gunk. Gold claimed he had struck crude oil, but geochemists insisted the gunk was dirty diesel fuel—which had been used to lubricate the drill and had seeped into the rock for four months before the well began pumping. While Gold says the gunk was "more easily ignitable than diesel and had a different odor," skeptics pointed to fluid analysis, which detected the presence of markers consistent with the chemistry of diesel.

To clear matters up, a water-based lubricant was used in a second well, drilled in 1991. This well again yielded some oil and methane, the principal ingredient in natural gas. Again, Gold and a group of sympathetic Swedish and Russian geologists claimed he had proven his theory. But American geologists argued that the amounts of oil were so small that they might be attributed to the thin layer of surface sediment that overlays the Swedish granite. By this time, Vattenfall had lost more than $40 million, and it abandoned its search for a domestic source of petroleum. Angry stockholders began to turn on Gold. A Stockholm investigative magazine, *Scoop,* castigated him for having engineered the whole fiasco.

The *Scoop* article does not accuse Gold of any wrongdoing. But back in the corridors of American universities, gossip began to circulate. Gold was rumored to have profited on shares of the drilling venture—shares that he reportedly sold before Vattenfall's troubles went public. Gold was infuriated by these allegations. "The idea that someone with a scientific career behind him would risk destroying it with a gross swindle of this kind is just so utterly absurd," he fumes.

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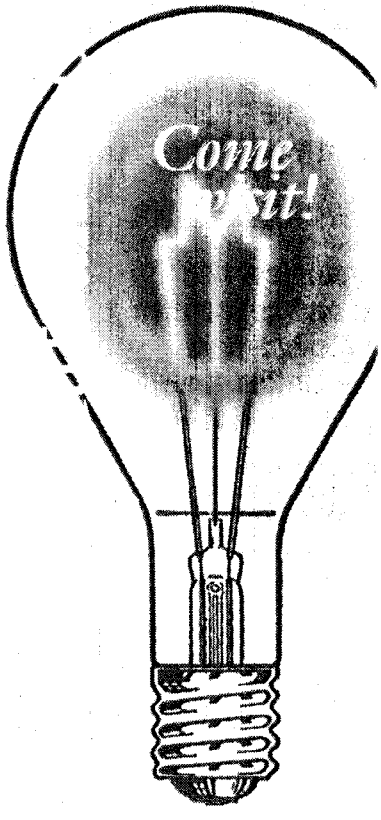
*of Energy Gases,* a USGS compendium of current knowledge about natural gas, included an article by Gold titled "The Origin of Methane in the Crust of the Earth," his opponents used the Swedish debacle to cast him as a charlatan who should not be permitted to contribute to USGS publications. (Gold's opponents were further irked by another article, "New Thinking About Natural Gas," by driller Robert Hefner, who concluded "that my knowledge and experience of natural gas...are accounted for more clearly by Gold's ideas than by conventional theories.") The ensuing debate fractured the book's editorial board; three of its eight members resigned in protest over publishing Gold's and Hefner's work.

Following publication of the book in 1993, thirty-four top geologists circulated an unflinching letter demanding retraction of the whole book and its accompanying educational video. David Howell, the volume's editor, was shocked. "The most stupefying aspect to me was that university professors signed on with this letter saying that the book should be retracted. Burned! We were supposed to burn the book," he says. The USGS stood fast, and Gold sued for libel. He dropped the case only after receiving a formal apology. (To Gold's delight, the book remains in circulation.)

Howell finds it ironic that the staunchest opposition came from geologists in the petroleum industry, which has historically reaped such enormous benefits from the scientifically suspect schemes of "charlatans and guys with crazy ideas." (The vast reserves of Saudi Arabia and many Texas oil fields were discovered by stubborn prospectors who ignored geologists' warnings that they would be oil dry.) "Why was it that the people closest to the petroleum industry were having such heartburn over the process?" he asks. "In part, there's something naggingly possible about his ideas, which would compromise the whole rationale by which they were developing petroleum-exploration strategies, spending billions of dollars."

Petroleum is indeed a business in which intrepid entrepreneurs have often foiled the predictions of industry experts like John Archbold, the Standard Oil chief executive who in 1885 rashly promised to drink every gallon of oil produced west of the Mississippi. (Pennsylvania was then considered America's oil capital.) Historically, it might be argued that much of the world's supply of oil has been found by defying, rather than following, prevailing geologic wisdom. It is a business in which Gold, an entrepreneur of ideas who relishes tweaking the establishment, should find himself right at home. Though somewhat pugnacious by academic standards, the Gold affair is genteel compared to the cutthroat petroleum industry. It was J. Paul Getty, after all, who famously proclaimed, "The meek shall inherit the Earth, but not the mineral rights."

**SIMON COLE**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# TEX

WHEN THE TEXAS GRASS roots organization All Neighbors United attempted to stop a state agency from granting a permit for a wood-burning incinerator in a Lubbock neighborhood, it turned to law professor Frank Skillern. The match seemed ideal: Skillern, who teaches at nearby Texas Tech, has nearly thirty years' experience in environmental and property law. The group is one of dozens in Texas that are increasingly vocal and active in fighting waste-burning permits near schools and densely concentrated neighborhoods. Together, they launched a lawsuit against the Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission.

Yet, this fall, Skillern gave up his pro bono work for All Neighbors United, as well as work he was doing for a local PTA and individual neighbors opposed to the incinerator. The reason: Law school dean W. Frank Newton informed him that his efforts came into conflict with a new state budget rider that withholds salary from any state employee who "serves as an expert witness or consultant in litigation against the state." In a state where public universities are still reeling from the *Hopwood* decision's overturning of affirmative-action policies, the rider is a significant setback for academics who want to play a role in public-policy debates. According to Michael Olivas, a higher-education-law expert at the University of Houston, the rider is sweeping in its application—and, "if challenged, I think will prove unconstitutional."

The rider's author, Democratic state representative Pete Gallego, says he never meant his work to be interpreted so broadly. In federal court testimony, Gallego said one of his main intents in drafting the rider was to stop state employees from testifying in medical-malpractice lawsuits against state teaching hospitals. "You had medical faculty from one state institution testifying against the next state med school," he griped.

Nonetheless, Gallego's rider to the General Appropriations Act has been enthusiastically applied by the state

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attorney general's office—with results that have distressed professors of all political stripes: The ban on expert-witness testimony hasn't just stymied Skillern's environmental work, it has also frustrated professors poised to defend tobacco companies.

As the Texas legislature's session wound down in early June, the office of Texas attorney general Dan Morales began exploiting the rider to target professors scheduled to testify as expert witnesses for cigarette manufacturers. Robert Hoover, a tenured marketing professor at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi, had signed on as a $200-an-hour expert witness for tobacco companies in the state's multibillion-dollar litigation to recover costs for smoking-related illnesses. But Hoover's deposition, scheduled for July, was summarily canceled by an assistant attorney general. Soon after, a lawyer for the A&M system, Melissa Ricard, informed Hoover that, "should you decide to testify against the State, Texas A&M...may be obligated to withhold some or all of your salary." A similar warning was issued to Cecil Reynolds, a specialist in neuropsychology who is consulting for tobacco companies in the Texas litigation.

CORBIS-BETTMANN

So far, the tobacco lawsuit is the only case in which the attorney general has taken specific action against professors. But public universities across Texas are filled with professors and students who routinely oppose the state in areas such as criminal justice. Would Hoover be the first in a line of silenced professors?

Hoover decided to fight the rider. He filed a First Amendment challenge in federal district court in Austin. Attorney R. James George Jr., who represents both Hoover and the Texas Faculty Association, complains bitterly about the state's actions: "They're saying, 'You say what you believe the truth is, and you'll lose your salary.'"

Ultimately, Hoover's argument proved persuasive in court: Judge James Nowlin issued an injunction allowing him to continue his work with Philip Morris, including testifying in court. The judge later allowed Skillern and Reynolds to join the case against the rider's legitimacy.

Other professors, however, are still vulnerable to state sanctions, and many say that the specter of retaliation has made them turn away from consulting work of any kind. Meanwhile, the state attorney general's office, which is appealing Nowlin's decision, has raised the prospect of harsher action if its cherished no-testimony rider is found unconstitutional. Assistant Attorney General James Todd told Judge Nowlin that if the measure were thrown out state lawmakers would likely pass a law that is more clearly within their powers: a ban on *all* outside employment by state employees.

**ROBERT ELDER JR.**


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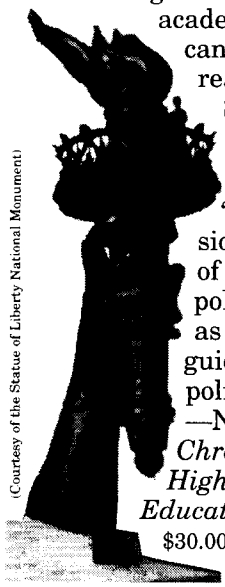

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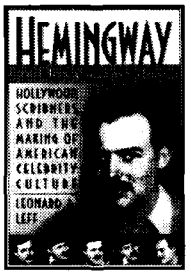


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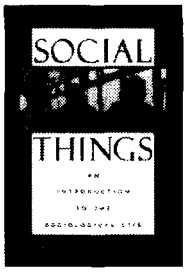


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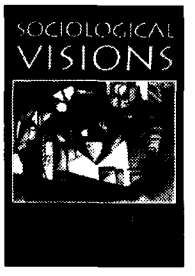


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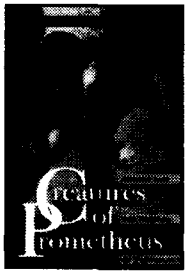


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# Breakthrough

WE ASKED NINE EXPERTS TO RECOMMEND THEIR FAVORITE BOOKS ON AN INCREASINGLY GLOBAL PHENOMENON:

**Bruce Lawrence, professor of Islamic studies at Duke University and author of *Defenders of God: The Fundamentalist Revolt Against the Modern Age* (South Carolina, 1995) and *Shattering the Myth: Islam Beyond Violence* (Princeton, forthcoming).**

"In reassessing fundamentalism, one would be hard pressed to find an issue more central or more contested than its relation to civil society. Is religion part of civil society or not? If so, what role does it play in either countering totalitarian politics or supporting them? Are fascism, fundamentalism, and fanaticism categorically equivalent in denying freedom and individual rights in the name of ideological conformity? Two recent books grapple with these questions while examining the persistence of fundamentalism as nationalism in Eastern Europe and elsewhere. Tracing the many secular sources of post-1989 Polish democracy, **José Casanova**'s *Public Religions in the Modern World* (Chicago, 1994) exposes the political limits of Catholic-inspired dissent. And **Dominique Colas**, in *Civil Society and Fanaticism* (Stanford, 1997), argues that there must be a law-governed state, with institutions of representation and mediation, to create and sustain civil society."

**R. Scott Appleby, professor of history at the University of Notre Dame, co-editor of the five-volume *Fundamentalist Project* (Chicago, 1991–95), and editor of *Spokesmen for the Despised: Fundamentalist Leaders of the Middle East* (Chicago, 1996).**

"After a decade of defining fundamentalism as a broad comparative category encompassing an array of anti-secular, anti-pluralist religio-political movements, scholars are now using it as one of several lenses to analyze social-protest movements. And the best studies reserve the term 'fundamentalism' for movements that react primarily to the secular state's marginalization of religion (as in Pakistan) rather than apply it to competing ethnic, religious, or nationalistic blocs (as in the former Yugoslavia). Thus **Stanley J. Tambiah**'s *Leveling Crowds: Ethnonationalist Conflicts and Collective Violence in South Asia* (California, 1996) portrays Sikh radicalism as truly fundamentalist but regards Hindu, Muslim, and Buddhist activism as subordinate to ethnic- and language-based nationalisms vying for influence in India, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka."

**Joel Carpenter, provost of Calvin College and author of *Revive Us Again: The Reawakening of American Fundamentalism* (Oxford, 1997).**

"*Is Jesus Your Personal Savior?: In Search of Canadian Evangelicalism in the 1990s* (McGill-Queen's, 1996), by the late **George Rawlyk**, is a powerful book by a shrewd and eloquent Canadian historian. Rawlyk draws on historical research, a national opinion survey, and personal interviews to argue that Canadian evangelical and fundamentalist movements have been more spiritually intense, populist, and peaceable than their U.S. counterparts. Rawlyk was at once an ardent Baptist and a democratic socialist who wrote religious history from the ground up, insisting that 'if you want to know what people are doing in the religious realm, and why they are doing it, you have to ask them.' The book is richly descriptive of ordinary people's religious experiences, and through them it shows the changing—and unchanging—nature of Canadian religiosity."

**Faye Ginsburg, professor of anthropology at New York University, author of *Contested Lives: The Abortion Debate in an American Community* (California, 1989), and co-editor of *Conceiving the New World Order: The Global Politics of Reproduction* (California, 1995).**

"Nancy Ammerman's *Bible Believers: Fundamentalists in the Modern World* (Rutgers, 1987) broke new ground in helping readers to understand the lives of those absorbed in fundamentalist Christianity. An exciting new work that offers insight into fundamentalist life is **Susan Harding**'s *Standing in the Gap: American Fundamentalism and the Language of Jerry Falwell* (Princeton, forthcoming). Harding's innovative, elegantly written study is based on a decade of intensive, multi-sited fieldwork following the emergence and evolution of Falwell's independent Baptist ministry, which she takes as paradigmatic of the new fundamentalism. Central to the study is an analysis of the rhetorical and narrative conventions embedded in the born-again experience, which Harding all but experienced as a participant-observer."

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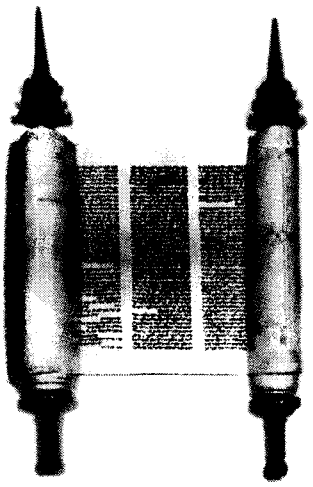
**Janet Belcove-Shalin, an independent scholar and editor of *New World Hasidim: Ethnographic Studies of Hasidic Jews in America* (SUNY, 1995).**

"Debra Renée Kaufman's *Rachel's Daughters: Newly Orthodox Jewish Women* (Rutgers, 1991) examines the relation between feminism and fundamentalism by exploring the attraction of secular Jewish women to the Jewish religious right. Culling interviews with 150 newly Orthodox Jewish women, Kaufman demonstrates that many of her subjects have disavowed their feminism yet maintain, and even celebrate, a set of women-centered values in the sex-segregated, patriarchal society of contemporary Hasidism. In a field where Jewish orthodoxy is often studied only in terms of Hasidic men, Kaufman is one of a handful of feminist scholars who have uncovered the voices of Hasidic women."

. . . .

**Paul Boyer, professor of history at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and author of *When Time Shall Be No More: Prophecy Belief in Modern American Culture* (Harvard, 1992).**

"Christine Leigh Heyrman's rich historical insights in *Southern Cross: The Beginnings of the Bible Belt* (Knopf, 1997) shed fascinating light on today's religious scene, from the Christian Coalition to the Promise Keepers. Even though the Bible Belt knows no regional boundaries, the South for many reasons has long been congenial to evangelicalism and fundamentalism. And Heyrman argues that in the early nineteenth century, populist Southern evangelicals radically challenged the region's mores on a whole range of issues, including hierarchies of race, gender, class, and even age. But as they battled hostility and courted respectability, evangelicals eventually embraced and later staunchly defended the status quo. Whether the conservative, if not reactionary, political and social views of today's evangelicals and fundamentalists might change remains an open question. But Heyrman at least demonstrates that such views did not always prevail in the Bible Belt."



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**Linda Kintz, professor of English at the University of Oregon and author of *Between Jesus and the Market: The Emotions That Matter in Right-Wing America* (Duke, 1997).**

Kintz says she has explored fundamentalism "through the popular-culture texts of fundamentalist and evangelical writers themselves. From another direction, the socio-psychoanalytic work of **Jacqueline Rose** in *Why War?: Psychoanalysis, Politics, and the Return to Melanie Klein* (Blackwell, 1993) traces the way economic fragmentation produces fear

# Beliefs and Believers...Theories and Theorists

## Revive Us Again
**The Reawakening of American Fundamentalism**

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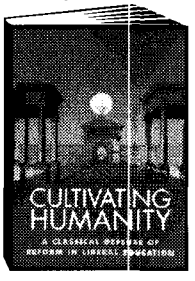


Nussbaum contends that liberal education is alive and well on today's American campuses and is a viable, constructive, and essential part of any democratic society. Taking on conservative critics of academe, she argues that sustained reform in the aim and content of liberal education is the most vital force in higher education today. *(Harvard Univ. Press) hardcover* ~~$26.00~~

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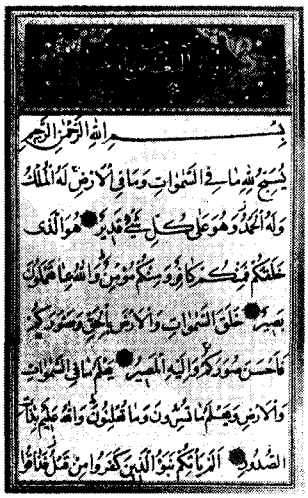
and anxiety that in turn inspire fantasies of symbolic cohesion. Rose analyzes the dangers of a politics that rests on literal interpretations of language and natural law, whether in biblical or constitutional contexts—examining in the process the role of conservative think tanks that currently turn fundamentalist beliefs into public-policy initiatives."

* * * *

**George Marsden, professor of history at the University of Notre Dame and author of *Fundamentalism and American Culture* (Oxford, 1982) and *Understanding Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism (Eerdmans*, 1991).**

"After the Scopes trial in 1925, social scientists predicted fundamentalism would retreat as secular education advanced. Joel Carpenter's *Revive Us Again: The Reawakening of American Fundamentalism* (Oxford, 1997) illustrates why fundamentalism is still with us. Focusing on the 1930s and 1940s, he shows that political reaction is not the essence of fundamentalism. Rather, fundamentalists built independent bases through revivals, although they remained militant defenders of biblical Christianity. Their methods, including radio and radio-style rallies, were modern and novel. Billy Graham, who in the 1950s built a large evangelical coalition, got his start in this network of independent fundamentalist agencies. From these roots, a host of innovative revival-oriented movements has continued to grow. Not only fundamentalists like Jerry Falwell, but many evangelicals, such as Campus Crusade for Christ, are heirs to the spirit that Carpenter depicts."



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**Ali Mirsepassi, professor of sociology and Middle Eastern studies at Hampshire College, who is at work on a study of Islam and modernity.**

Mirsepassi takes issue with an important recent book by the French scholar **Olivier Roy** *The Failure of Political Islam* (Harvard, 1994). "Roy argues that 'Islamism, now faded into neofundamentalism, is not a geostrategic factor: It will neither unify the Muslim world nor change the balance of power in the Middle East.' For Roy, the course of events in Iran, Pakistan, and Sudan demonstrates that political Islam is nothing but 'unemployment plus *Shari'a*' (Islamic law). However, in dismissing Islamists for pinning their hopes to a utopian Islamic community that never existed, Roy ignores a crucial question: Why have Muslims mobilized around the nostalgia for a utopian community? Anyone interested in addressing that question would do well to read *Muslim Politics* (Princeton, 1996), by **Dale Eickelman** and **James Piscatori.**"

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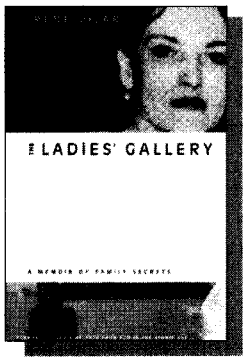


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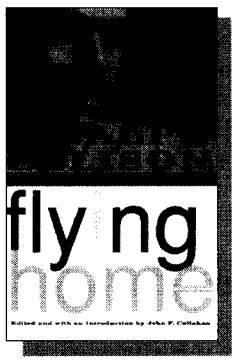


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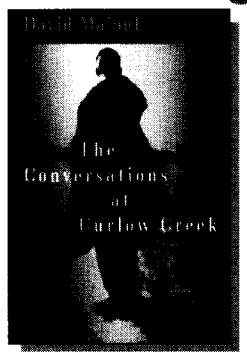


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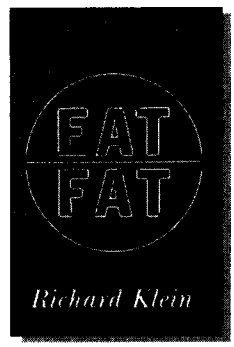


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# Inside history

CONFUCIUS IS A HOMEGROWN CHINESE ICON—one of few to survive centuries of dynastic and communist rule—and a unifying symbol of the country's past. Peddlers hawk his sayings; restaurateurs name establishments after him; the communist government puts his likeness on a postage stamp. But, in an upcoming book on the ancient sage, Lionel M. Jensen, a historian at the University of Colorado in Denver, reveals that Confucian philosophy may not be quite as Chinese as we've thought.

While in graduate school, Jensen was struck that "Kong Fuzi," the Chinese term Jesuit missionaries transliterated as Confucius in the sixteenth century, never appeared in the writings of the *ru*, China's educated and bureaucratic class. "There was literally nothing in *ru* literature that ever used the term 'Kong Fuzi,'" Jensen says. Instead, there existed a cult around a great, ancestral teacher called Kongzi (551?–479? B.C.), whose followers had collected his sayings. This teacher was revered simply as a wise philosopher, not a prophet.

When Italian Jesuits Matteo Ricci and Michele Ruggieri established their mission in Zhaoqing, China, in 1583, all that began to change. In *Manufacturing Confucianism: Chinese Traditions & Universal Civilization* (Duke), Jensen argues that the Jesuits, looking for a way to penetrate the closed corridors of China's intellectual elite, discovered in Kongzi both a reassuringly familiar figure and an irresistible opportunity. At the time, Kongzi's teachings on how to live a proper life had been virtually obscured by centuries of voluminous *ru* commentary. By focusing on the particular precepts attributed to Kongzi (such as: "To regard knowing something as knowing it, to regard *not* knowing as *not* knowing—*this* is knowing"), the Jesuits began the process of remaking Kongzi through Christian eyes. After all, the Old Testament was littered with the words of prophets that foreshadowed the coming of Christ. Why couldn't Kongzi be comparable to, say, Isaiah?

But the Jesuits' mission was not simply an instance of Western cultural imperialism. Indeed, as they mastered the language and habits of the *ru*, the Jesuits were accepted as members of that intellectual elite. Practicing what has been termed "accommodationism" by modern scholars, the Jesuits adopted indigenous dress and learned the local Chinese dialects—a sharp departure from the behavior of Western missionaries elsewhere in the world. (While Ricci and Ruggieri were donning the regal garb of the *ru*, Jensen writes, missionaries at the Jesuit headquarters in nearby Macao were trying to "Portugalize" the natives, insisting the converts assume Western names, clothes, and customs.)

Along with a half dozen fellow Jesuits, Ricci and Ruggieri (the latter left the mission in the late 1590s) began to interpret *ru* doctrine as a kind of revealed theology, a divine light that prefigured the eventual embrace of Christianity by the Chinese. "Ricci and his fellow missionaries began to sermonize a Christianized *ru* advocating the resurrection of the true teaching of Kongzi," Jensen writes. In reports of their work that they sent back to Europe, they identified the ancient progenitor of the *ru* as "Kong Fuzi," a rare honorific for Kongzi that could be found on the spirit tablets of certain regional temples but nowhere in *ru* literature. This Kong Fuzi—or Confucius, as the Latinization read—was the avatar of a proto-Christian natural theology.

Surprisingly, the Jesuits' Confucius was enthusiastically received by Chinese of all classes, including, ultimately, some of the *ru*. Their message reached the unlettered peasants through sermons delivered in the countryside, while the literate classes, inspired by the Jesuits'

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teachings, printed books devoted to the Heavenly Master. (Envious of the Jesuits' success, one *ru* scholar complained, "Their poison is spreading everywhere and threatens to contaminate myriad generations.") Apparently, the Jesuits' triumph was due to their talent for cultural assimilation and their skill at respecting indigenous ways of thinking. "Rather than arguing that Chinese difference from Christianity constituted falsehood, as would later Catholic and Protestant missionaries," Jensen writes, "Ricci presumed their complementarity and drew the metaphysical presumptions of contemporary *ru* into dialogue with his own faith."

Envious of the Jesuits' success, one *ru* scholar complained, "Their poison is spreading everywhere."

The enthusiasm was mutual. Reading the Jesuits' letters in the 1590s, European intelligentsia were taken with reports of this pre-Christian philosophy. Enlightenment philosophers, including Voltaire, Rousseau, and Montesquieu, praised Confucius in their work. In 1690 François Fénelon wrote a philosophical dialogue between Confucius and Socrates, and in 1700 Leibniz offered this eulogy to the Jesuits: "I praise the foresight of Matteo Ricci, a great man, for following the example of the church fathers who interpreted Plato and other philosophers in a Christian fashion."

Contemporary scholars might want to be less hasty with their accolades. "We can't know for sure that the Jesuits were the first to use the term 'Kong Fuzi' in *ru* literature," cautions Haun Saussy, chairman of the department of Asian languages at Stanford University. "Jensen is asserting a negative. Someone may get mad enough to dig up a previous reference to Kong Fuzi." Indeed, there are already indications that Jensen's revisionist look at Confucius won't sit easily with everyone. At a Columbia University conference last year, a fellow historian accused him of "making fun of Confucianism." Overall, however, Saussy praises Jensen's approach: "If we cut the Jesuits loose from the moorings of both Eastern and Western traditions, and see them as creating their own eclectic school, they become much more interesting."

Skeptical Sinologists are likely to be reassured by the second half of Jensen's book, in which he applies his theory of cultural accommodation to the work of two Chinese scholars central to the Confucianist revival in this century. By 1900, he writes, the Jesuits' ecumenical vision of Confucius had largely disappeared, supplanted by a set of highly parochial, narrowly religious practices. With the hope of resurrecting a more cosmopolitan ideal, Zhang Binglin published *The Etiology of Ru* in 1910, which was followed by Hu Shi's *An Elaboration on Ru* in 1934. Both men turned to Western sources to accomplish their task. Zhang, an aficionado of British evolutionary theorist Herbert Spencer, gave Kongzi a determinist spin, arguing that his contribution marked the *ru*'s transition from primitive shamanism to a more sophisticated intellectual vocation. Hu's work, on the other hand, was influenced by the years he spent at Cornell, when he briefly converted to Christianity. Relying in part on the work of Ricci and Ruggieri, Hu argued that Confucius and Jesus, who lived within a few centuries of each other, represented the Eastern and Western teachers who brought religion into its modern phase.

Relations between China and the West have long been strained. (Witness the recent contretemps over the making of the new Brad Pitt movie *Seven Years in Tibet*.) If Lionel Jensen is right, cooperation between the hemispheres has an equally proud history; not all of it has been told.

**MARK OPPENHEIMER**

# DOUBLE TROUBLE

LOOKING FOR A COPY OF ROBERT NOZICK'S *Anarchy, State, and Utopia* or Clifford Geertz's *The Interpretation of Cultures*? You may soon have trouble finding either book on the shelf at your local bookstore. HarperCollins, one of forty-four publishers the National Association of College Stores (NACS) named in a price-discrimination investigation this past March, recently sent booksellers a list of seven hundred titles—including those by Nozick, Geertz, and authors from Freud and Heidegger to Michael Walzer and Jean Piaget—that will now be sold to all booksellers at a meager discount of 20 percent below the cover price. These smaller discounts will satisfy NACS's requirement for equitable pricing. The trouble is that such "short discounted" books rarely make it into the aisles of Barnes & Noble and other mainstream retailers.

At first glance, NACS's demands seem eminently reasonable: The association claims that publishers routinely sell the same books to different—or, in some cases, even the same—stores at varying discounts, depending on whether or not the book



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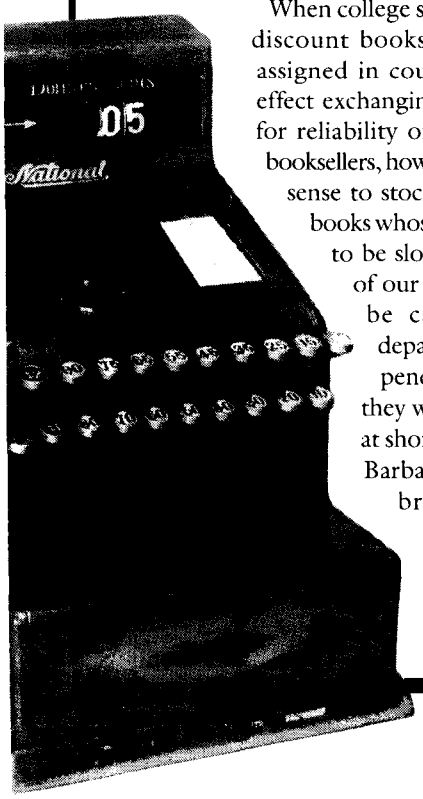
has been ordered for use in a university course. Course-adoption books are often sold to college stores at the 10 to 20 percent short discount, while the same books may be sold to a general retailer or to the trade department of a college store at a more attractive 40 percent discount off the cover price. Such policies, NACS alleges, violate the Robinson-Patman Act, an antitrust law that prohibits the sale of the same product to competing purchasers at different prices when the disparity will injure competition. In July, NACS announced it was pursuing litigation against just three of the forty-four presses that it believed had violated the law—Oxford, Cambridge, and Addison Wesley Longman. Nonetheless, the suit has reverberated throughout the academic publishing world. In response to NACS's pressure, ten publishers have, like HarperCollins, publicly pledged to change their discount structures. "There is no legal defense for these policies," concedes one sales manager.

And yet, it's not fair simply to accuse publishers of being sneaky. Dual discounting first emerged as a solution to a common dilemma. On the one hand, books with small print runs tend not to be profitable unless they are primarily sold at short discounts—with publishers taking home at least 80 percent of the cover price on each book sold. On the other hand, a short discount is a red flag to trade booksellers that a book has a limited scholarly audience and isn't likely to zoom off their shelves. Barnes & Noble, for example, does purchase some carefully selected short-discount books targeted to particular stores, according to John Kulka, the chain's divisional merchandise manager. But he adds that "a title gets a short discount if the publisher's marketing and editorial people feel it doesn't have salability in the retail environment."



ARCHIVE PHOTOS/HIRZ

When college stores order short-discount books that have been assigned in courses, they are in effect exchanging depth of profit for reliability of sales. For trade booksellers, however, it makes little sense to stock more expensive books whose sales they expect to be slow. "A wide range of our books would not be carried in trade departments and independent bookstores if they were only available at short discounts," says Barbara Colson, Cambridge University Press's North American branch director. "It's part of our mission to disseminate material as widely as we can. Authors want to see their books in the stores." But Colson adds that to satisfy NACS's demands by using only a trade discount "would pose a difficulty for the press, and in many cases it would push the price of the book higher."

Publishers are not alone in fearing rising prices or narrowing readerships. Even some booksellers fear that NACS's bid for uniform discounts may backfire. "I can't tell you how angry I am at NACS for failing to think of itself as part of an educational community," fumes John Cella, manager of Chicago's Seminary Co-op bookstore. A commercial store that also stocks course adoptions and belongs to NACS, Seminary recently filed an affidavit on behalf of Cambridge. Cella does not mince words: "NACS has got it 100 percent backward. Their position is that these books are really trade books and should come into all stores at 40 percent." But what's actually happening, Cella argues, is that presses are giving *academic* books bigger discounts to accommodate mainstream retailers who stock only trade-discount titles.

Says NACS spokesman Jerry Buchs, "In no way is NACS trying to mandate what a publisher's policy should be. We are simply looking for fair and equitable policies among college stores and their competitors." What such policies might look like is a subject of concern for many publishers. Will university presses go the HarperCollins route, abandoning the trade market altogether for certain highbrow titles? Or will they take the risk involved with doubling the discount to 40 percent, even when their print runs can be as small as eight hundred copies? Buchs won't venture a guess, saying, "It's all speculation." But one university-press veteran has little doubt that the short discount would prevail: "In this very difficult and confused market," he says, "presses must be prudent unless they have deep pockets." And deep pockets are pretty hard to come by with university subsidies, library sales, and National Endowment for the Humanities grants shriveling up. One marketing director says of the possibility of a NACS victory, "One more squeeze on small publishers would be pretty hard to take."

Course-adoption books are sold to college stores at a 10 to 20 percent discount, while the same books are sold to a general retailer at 40 percent off.

The level of trade potential necessary to justify the risk of an across-the-board 40 percent dis-



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count would probably vary from publisher to publisher. One can speculate that a book like Chicago's *The Truly Disadvantaged* (1987), by Harvard sociologist William Julius Wilson, will not be quick to disappear from Barnes & Noble shelves: After all, Chicago is one of a very few university presses whose commercial success enables it to function without university subsidy and indeed to feed some of its profits back into the university's coffers. Says Chicago marketing director Carol Kaspar, "If you think there's trade potential, you err on the side of generosity and go with the trade discount." But a representative of a smaller university press takes a darker view: "If NACS ends up investigating all university presses, they will make it pretty difficult for any of us to do business."

So far, the NACS probe is limited to the three presses named in the suit. "We've chosen these three because there were numerous concerns regarding their policies," explains Buchs. Many in the publishing community speculate that NACS's choice of two British university presses and one commercial press was not accidental: Might the association have wanted to avoid taking an action that would have pitted, say, Yale's bookstore, a NACS member, against Yale University Press? Muses one publisher, "NACS is in a difficult position. Part of its membership thinks this is a very bad idea." Nonetheless, the suit against Oxford, Cambridge, and Addison Wesley may mark only a beginning. Warns Buchs, "The other publishers on our initial list have not been dropped. Our investigation is ongoing."

All this is bad news for publishers—but it's bad for readers as well. After all, the most likely result of a settlement in NACS's favor will be a hike in book prices. Says Cella incredulously, "If NACS thinks we're going to get these university presses to deepen their discounts, that will only happen if prices go up. So they're effectively suing publishers to raise prices!" What really bothers Cella, however, is the impact the NACS lawsuit might have on bookstore shelves. "Books like Geertz's have a market wider than just that composed of people told to read them in class," he says. "These books are important to the culture and the country, and a 20 percent discount will eliminate the ability of general bookstores to stock them."

Sound bleak? Well, there's always special order.

**LAURA SECOR**

# FEAR & LEARNING

IN LATER YEARS, HE MELLOWED. BUT DURING his prime, Richard McKeon (1900–1985) was terrifying. At the University of Chicago—where he was professor of Greek and philosophy—McKeon taught his courses as if they were to the life of the mind what basic training is to the Marine Corps. Susan Sontag audited his seminar on Aristotle in the early 1950s and came to revere McKeon. "But," she recalls, "he also made me, and I think not only me, cringe. He might put a question to the class, a student would dare to say something, and if it were less than brilliant, McKeon often replied, 'That is a very stupid answer.'"

For anyone drawn to Chicago by the reforms of President Robert Hutchins—whose vision of higher education demanded a sustained immersion in the primary texts of Western civilization, and no football—the professor's demanding pedagogical style couldn't have been entirely surprising. He had been recruited by Hutchins in 1935, and over the next four decades a platoon of distinguished intellectuals trained under him: Richard Rorty, Paul Goodman, Wayne Booth, and Robert Coover, among others. By the mid-1970s, he even had become a minor figure in American pop culture—as a villain in Robert Pirsig's best-seller *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance*. McKeon was the model for the "Spinozist and medievalist" professor with whom the narrator does battle over the interpretation of Plato's *Phaedrus* (and of reality itself). The biker-philosopher wins their agon. Even so, he has a nervous breakdown. Under Professor McKeon, that must have happened with some regularity.

But McKeon's influence went beyond fostering mental rigor through classroom humiliation. The *Introduction to Aristotle* he prepared for the Modern Library (1947) remains in print. So does his massive edition of the philosopher's *Basic Works* (1941). And now, thanks to a cadre of disciples, McKeon's own philosophical work is becoming the object of vigilant scholarship. Besides issuing a monograph devoted to McKeon's "philosophic semantics"—the system of analysis he applied to Greek philosophy, quantum theory, and international relations, among other topics—the University of Chicago Press has recently launched two series of books that add considerably to the McKeon canon.

The first large volume of his *Selected Writings* appears in January; two more will follow. There's also a three-volume transcript of his "Ideas and Methods" course for the 1963–1964 academic year—complete with McKeon's lectures and his students' (understandably nervous) contributions to the Socratic dialogue, all of it laboriously recon-



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structed from tape recordings and the notes of participants. The first volume, *On Knowing: The Natural Sciences,* appeared in 1994. The editors—David B. Owen, a philosopher of education at Iowa State University, and Zahava K. McKeon, the late professor's second wife—are at work on the next two installments, which cover the social sciences and the humanities.

Essential to McKeon's scholarly method was an intricate taxonomy of the basic philosophical problems embedded in all attempts to know the world. To the acolyte, his "schema of philosophic semantics" offers something very like a periodic table of the elements: The components, properties, and relations among systems of thought are all charted with breathtaking neatness and abstraction. *On Knowing,* for example, charts how the concepts of space, time, and motion developed from ancient Greece through James Clerk Maxwell.

It was a quintessential method for reading the Great Books of the Western world. And when McKeon focused on Aristotle and medieval thought, an unwary listener might think of Mortimer Adler—the most famous Chicago lecturer and author who also ran the popular Great Books publishing enterprise. But the similarities were not deep. For Adler, St. Thomas was the True Philosophy—after which came six hundred years of modernist error, preemptively refuted in the *Summa.* For McKeon, however, the recovery of St. Thomas's legacy required diagramming his strong disagreements with other philosophers of the day. McKeon believed there was an uncanny modernity to the medievalists. And in any case, he had no patience with Adler's Aquinas-for-dummies approach.

In the classroom, bits of the semantic schemata went up on the chalkboard. The reader of the *Selected Writings,* however, gets few teaching aids. In his motorcycle diaries, Pirsig recalls the punishing experience of immersing himself in McKeon's prose—with its "wondrous and unexplained proliferations of abstract categories that seemed freighted with special meanings that never got stated and whose content could only be guessed at; these piled one after another so fast and so close that [the reader] knew he had no possible way of understanding what was before him, much less take issue with it."

Such criticism doesn't faze Chicago editor Doug Mitchell, who took eighteen courses with McKeon during his undergraduate and graduate years. He recalls that fellow students sometimes mocked their professor's "cookie-cutter" analytical method—but that, he insists, utterly overlooks the spirit of McKeon's work. His terminology, if abstract, tried to establish a kind of philosophical détente. "The point of the schematism," Mitchell says, "is to disentangle conflicting arguments and meanings, to facilitate communication between positions that otherwise seem totally at odds. McKeon's method helps you think your way to the concrete object and not waste time on ideological dispute." From the 1940s on, Mitchell notes, McKeon devoted most of his scholarly energy to questions of international cooperation, cultural exchange, and the future development of a world community. (He was adviser to the U.S. delegation at the first three sessions of UNESCO, and helped draft its founding statement.)

RICHARD McKEON

McKeon appeared as a villain in Robert Pirsig's best-seller *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance.*

It can be difficult to keep this more activist side of McKeon in mind while reading the papers collected in the new volume, *Philosophy, Science, and Culture.* As Mitchell indicates, the writings on "philosophic practice" (including his UN work) will make up the final volume in the *Selected Writings.* It won't be out until the year 2000, at the earliest. But there are moments when even an intimidated student of McKeon's writings catches a glimpse of the irenic spirit of his work—say, in "Philosophy and Theology, History and Science in the Thought of Bonaventura and Thomas Aquinas," which does not exactly sound like a tract for these multicultural times. There, McKeon refers in passing to a medieval treatise whose title he must have wanted to borrow for his own work: *The Concordance of Discordant Canons.*

**SCOTT MCLEMEE**

ZAHAVA K. MCKEON



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# BRIGHT FLIGHT

IN 1989, BERNARD LEFKOWITZ, THE AUTHOR of *Our Guys: The Glen Ridge Rape and the Secret Life of the Perfect Suburb,* found himself sitting through a disheartening lunch with his editor at Simon & Schuster. Less than a half year had elapsed since the Columbia University nonfiction-writing professor had received his six-figure advance for a book on a group of New Jersey high school athletes accused of raping a retarded teenager; Lefkowitz's research was far from finished. "My editor screamed for an hour at the top of her voice," he recalls. "The case still hadn't come to trial, and the sense was that somehow I was responsible for the slow criminal-justice system in New Jersey."

Four years later, when three of the Glen Ridge defendants were convicted of rape and Lefkowitz's manuscript finally completed, Simon & Schuster canceled his contract. But Lefkowitz was undeterred. After failing to place *Our Guys* with another trade publisher, he sold the book to the University of California Press, which published it last May to national acclaim. Defying the usual laws of gravity for a university-press book, it earned a glowing lead review in *The New York Times Book Review* and serialization in *Sports Illustrated* and *Ladies' Home Journal,* eventually selling close to seventeen thousand copies in hardcover.

For Lefkowitz, however, the move from mainstream to university publisher wasn't entirely sweet revenge; in fact, he says it was "kind of like going from hell to hell." Lefkowitz was dismayed to learn, for example, that he had to assume the burden of vetting the manuscript for libel, obtaining photos from the Glen Ridge yearbook for illustrations, and selling subsidiary rights. "I must have xeroxed thousands of pages of galleys to send to magazines," he says. Most frustrating of all was the fact that the first print run of four thousand books quickly sold out. "I must have been the only writer in America to have the cover of *The New York Times Book Review* and not a single book available in the stores."

"In hindsight, we should have printed more copies," admits Naomi Schneider, Lefkowitz's

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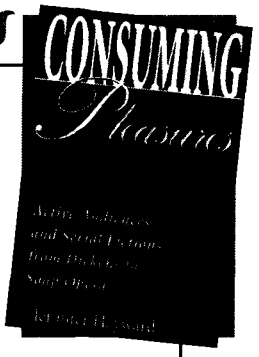


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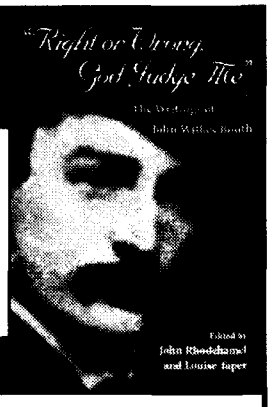


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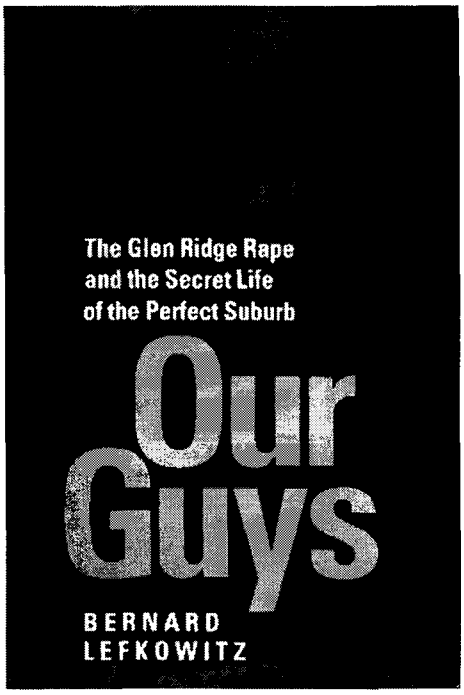
editor at California. But academic presses, she observes, can't reprint a book with the alacrity of a publisher that routinely orders fifty-thousand-copy print runs. "I've never had a book that generated this kind of media attention," says Schneider. "It's a new area that we're all just learning to navigate."

In recent years, university presses have often served as outlets for trade titles that slip through the cracks of houses increasingly dedicated to big print runs and instant hits. Typical is the publishing history of the University of Auckland's Bryan Boyd, author of the definitive biography of Vladimir Nabokov. In 1989, when Simon & Schuster balked at the length of his manuscript, Princeton matched Boyd's mid-five-figure advance and acquired the book, eventually publishing it in two volumes.

Over the past year—one of the worst for trade publishers in memory—an unusual number of authors have decamped to university presses. "All




## For Lefkowitz, the move from mainstream to university publisher wasn't entirely sweet revenge.

the big trade publishers have lost their commitment to the kind of writers that they got into the business to publish to begin with," says literary agent Deborah Karl, who placed *New Yorker* writer Lawrence Weschler's latest essay collection, *Calamities of Exile*, with Chicago after Pantheon (with whom Weschler remains under contract) unceremoniously passed. "You would have thought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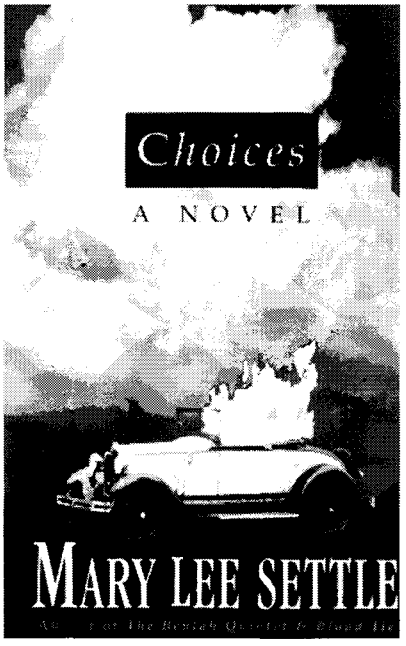
I was trying to flip an old piece of fish onto their plate every time I brought it up," Karl sighs.

An especially outspoken university- press convert is National Book Award–winning novelist Mary Lee Settle, who recently penned a diatribe for *The Washington Post* against her past publishers—Harper, Viking, and Farrar, Straus and Giroux. Exchanging the "bigger plans, fought-over advances and unkept promises from so-called major publishers for fine editing, peace, politeness, a small advance, the best distribution I have had in years, and beautiful production," Settle declared that her forthcoming two-volume memoir, which Doubleday and Viking rejected, will go to the University of South Carolina Press.




While Settle may enjoy the star treatment of a smaller list and the promise that her books will stay in print (a feat that is easier for a nonprofit publisher, who is not required to pay taxes on inventory), there are real limits to the sales and distribution that USC can provide. "I'm not going to tell you that we can go head-to-head with Knopf," says USC Press director Catherine Fry. And as the case of *Our Guys* makes all too clear, faced with the costs of advertising and other expenses, a university press is frequently unable to sustain the momentum of a potential best-seller.

Nor is that their responsibility, says Chicago editor Alan Thomas. "For a university press, sales of twenty thousand copies are a great success, yet it is easy to imagine that a writer who has worked with a commercial house might sell twenty thousand books and still find fault with a university press's effort." In the age of blockbuster publishing, perhaps mid-list authors like Lefkowitz are lucky to be published at all.

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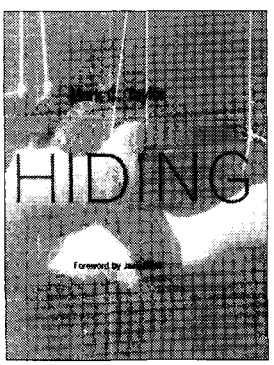


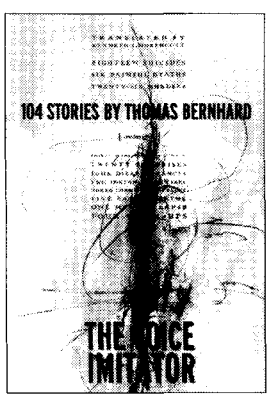


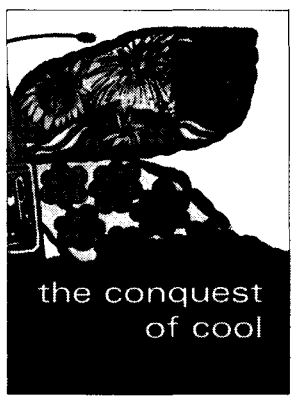


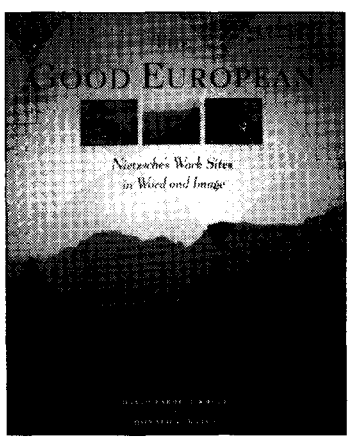


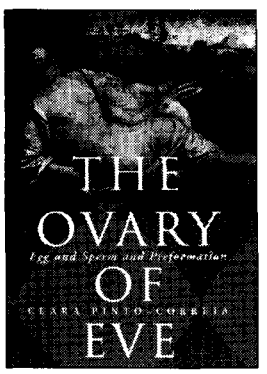


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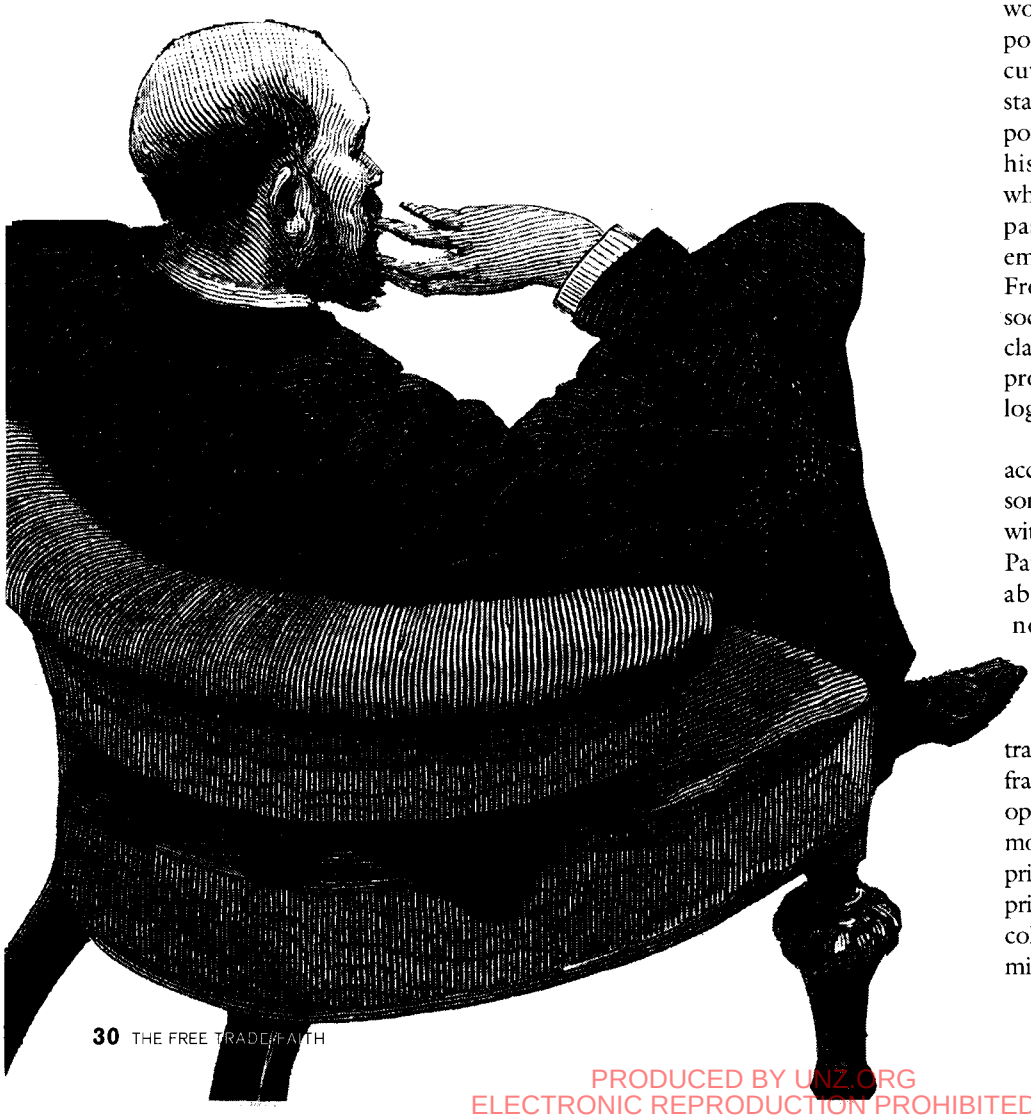
# THE FREE TRADE FAITH

## CAN WE TRUST THE ECONOMISTS?

BY EYAL PRESS



THIS PAST SPRING, THE JOURNALIST William Greider published *One World: Ready or Not* (Simon & Schuster), a bracing critique of global capitalism. The international economy is hurtling toward crisis, Greider warns, and a major reason is the astonishing spread of free trade, which has lowered wages, eroded national sovereignty, and led to a resurgence of sweatshops and other nineteenth-century ills. To Americans who pay close attention to debates about the international economy, this argument may sound familiar. It's the reason much of the country opposed the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), and it has made free trade among the most talked-about, polarizing issues in U.S. politics. It is also, as Greider notes several times in his narrative, a view that virtually no academic economists share.

Greider explains this glaring disjunction the way most popular critics of free trade do. Economists, he contends, have always had "difficulty grasping realities that did not appear in tabular form." Unlike journalists, they seldom venture beyond the classroom to speak with the workers dislocated by free trade. Unlike politicians, they aren't bothered by the cutthroat competition of rival nation-states (to the contrary, they celebrate its power to enhance efficiency). And unlike historians, they rarely bother to ask whether lessons can be derived from the past that contradict the assumptions embedded in their algebraic equations. Free trade is good for everyone, every society and almost everyone in it, neoclassical theory says, and the blinkered professors are spellbound by the elegant logic of it all.

Economists have been hearing these accusations against them a lot lately, and some have begun answering back—none with more vigor than MIT trade theorist Paul Krugman. For all the sound and fury about international trade, Krugman notes in his combative book *Pop Internationalism* (MIT, 1996), exports and imports still amount to just 10 percent of U.S. economic activity, and trade with Third World nations is a tiny fraction of that. The principal effect of opening markets to foreign competition, moreover, is to raise productivity and lower prices—which benefits most people. "Our primary mission," Krugman informs his colleagues, "should be to vaccinate the minds of our undergraduates against the



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misconceptions that are so predominant in what passes for educated discussion of international trade."

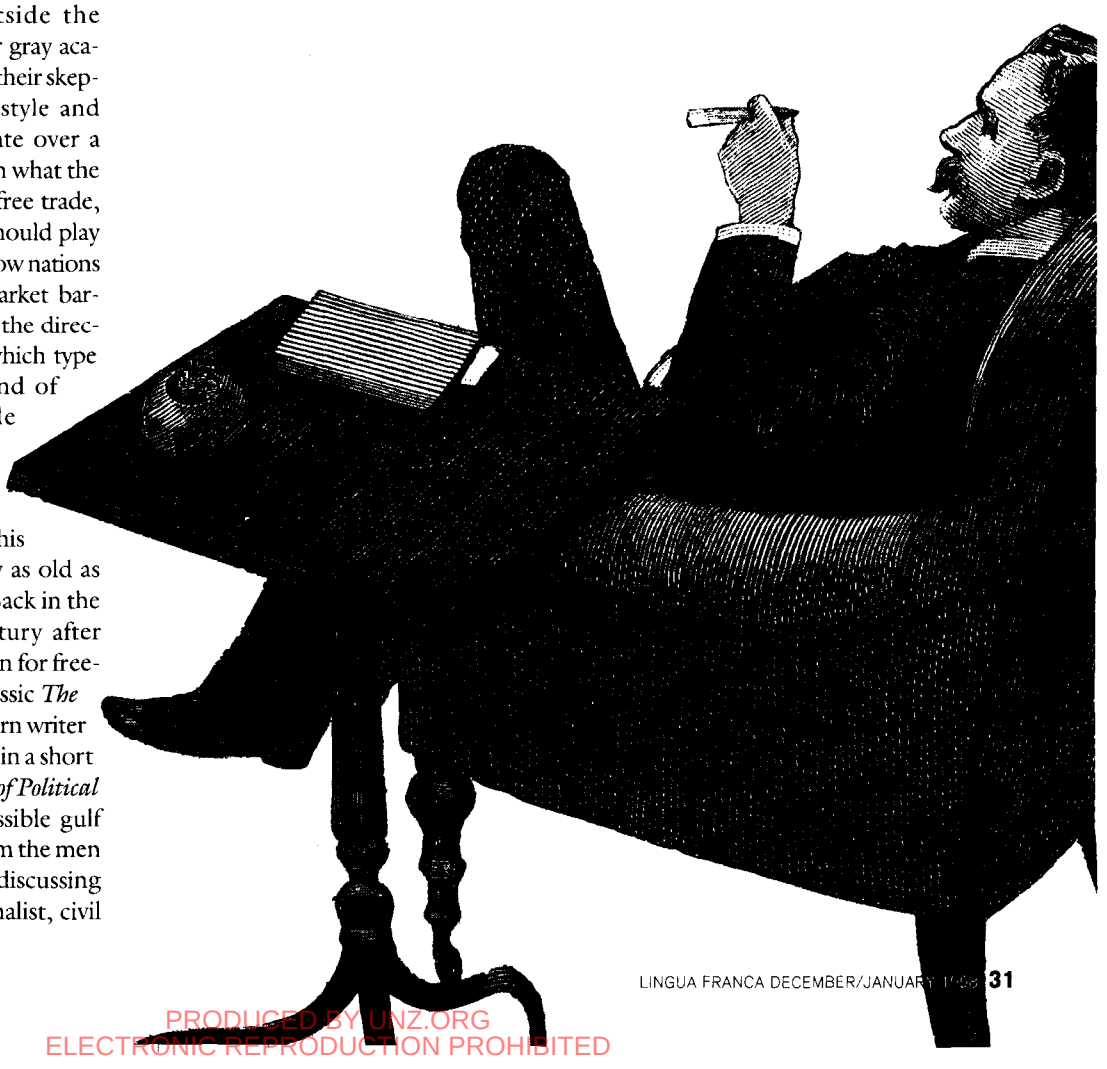
The dark prophecies of writers like Greider are, many economists feel, not only wrong but dangerous, convincing large segments of the public to heed the word of crude protectionists like Ross Perot and Pat Buchanan, whose tirades against the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade and NAFTA receive a sympathetic hearing among an odd assortment of right-leaning nationalists and pro-union liberals. Critics of free trade may wrap themselves in the mantle of public opinion, say the economists, but their views typically reflect the partisan concerns of a narrow sector of aggrieved workers and manufacturers, not the public at large.

Have the detached professors blinded themselves to the convulsive perils of globalization? Or is a host of journalists, policy wonks, and politicians merely pandering to the public's irrational fears? That depends, in the end, on whose version of reality one swallows. While economists brandish their professional training and knowledge of neoclassical theory as the basis for their faith in free trade, the critics vaunt their experience outside the academy—and their disdain for gray academic theory—as the source of their skepticism. These differences in style and background have fueled debate over a range of volatile questions: from what the historical record reveals about free trade, to the role that governments should play in shaping economic policy, to how nations and workers are affected as market barriers fall. At stake is not merely the direction of U.S. trade policy but which type of intellectual—and what kind of knowledge—ought to guide public discourse on an issue of burning political importance.

ARGUMENTS on this score are, as it happens, nearly as old as the theory of free trade itself. Back in the 1840s, more than a half century after Adam Smith laid the foundation for free-trade theory in his enduring classic *The Wealth of Nations*, a German-born writer named Friedrich List observed, in a short book called *The Natural System of Political Economy*, that "the widest possible gulf separates the men of theory from the men of practice when it comes to discussing free trade." A celebrated journalist, civil servant, and entrepreneur, List, like many of today's free-trade critics, gravitated toward the men of practice. In the 1820s, he traveled to America, mingled with leading financiers and politicians, and wrote a series of popular pamphlets promoting Henry Clay's American system of protective tariffs and government-financed internal improvements. Adam Smith's cosmopolitan economics would, List conceded, benefit the world's consumers by lowering prices. But whereas Smith envisioned a bustling global market in which all nations would prosper as trade barriers disappeared, List feared that the domestic producers of less advanced states would be buried beneath a tide of foreign imports. In other words, only industrial England would prosper and thrive. To shift the balance of power, developing nations (which at the time meant Germany and America) needed to shield their "infant industries"—a phrase List borrowed from Alexander Hamilton's 1791 Report on Manufactures—lest they remain primitive agrarian states.

List's thesis turned him into "the prophet of the ambitions of all underdeveloped societies," one contemporary observed, and drew admiration from Bismarck and other leading nineteenth-century statesmen. Tellingly, though, the German nationalist was never able to secure a permanent position teaching economics at a university—and he probably wouldn't find one today either. In his sweeping intellectual history of free trade, *Against the Tide* (Princeton, 1996), Dartmouth economist Douglas Irwin devotes a mere five pages to List, concluding that the infant-industry argument, though once accepted as a legitimate exception to free trade by some eminent theorists (including John Stuart Mill and Alfred Marshall), has long since been discarded by most economists. Protecting infant industries may unwittingly result in subsidizing outdated modes of production, the economist Robert Baldwin argued in an influential 1969 critique. In a rapidly modernizing, increasingly integrated global economy, developing states are far better off opening their doors to foreign competition and investment.

YET WHILE few mainstream economists embrace List's prescriptions,





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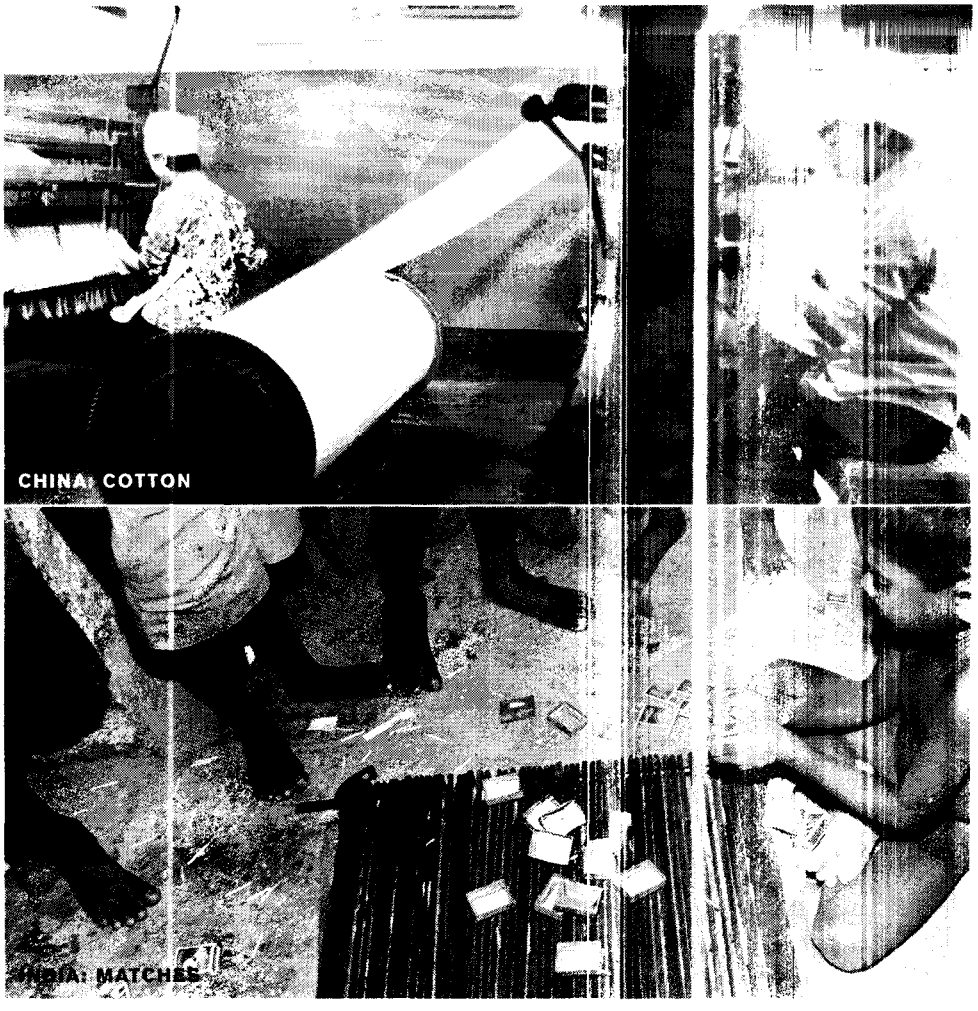
his views have won avid support among an array of journalists, politicians, and policy makers. One of his leading American admirers is the journalist James Fallows, who in his 1994 best-seller, *Looking at the Sun*, painted an exuberant portrait of the German nationalist while abrasively dismissing neoclassical economics. While studying economics in England and the United States, Fallows explained, he had never heard of List, and it's no wonder: Decades later, when the journalist scoured America's bookstores in search of an antidote to the neoclassical theory he had been taught in school, he couldn't locate a single volume by the German thinker. One day, however, he unexpectedly stumbled upon two of List's works—in a bookstore in Tokyo.

Appropriately so, Fallows noted, for while Anglo-Saxon economists fixated on "getting prices right"—as Adam Smith counseled—Japan and much of Asia heeded List's advice and protected domestic manufacturers, a policy that translated into higher prices on some products but lower rates of unemployment and greater social cohesion. Fallows's paean to List originally appeared as a cover story in *The Atlantic Monthly* and, at a time of widespread fears that East Asian imports were wiping out American manufacturing, elicited a buzz of controversy.

These days, that fear has greatly abated. But List's circle of admirers continues to include a diverse assortment of economic nationalists fearful of globalization's lacerating impact—from Pat Buchanan, whose impassioned America First! philosophy is extolled in far-right journals like *Human Events* and *Chronicles*, to Michael Lind, a conservative-turned-populist whose essays now appear in progressive magazines like *Dissent* and *Harper's*. This group's political diversity mirrors that of the larger anti-free-trade grouping, a coalition that ranges from anticorporate devotees of Ralph Nader to pro-business Perotistas.




REUTERS/DENNIS OWEN ARCHIVE PHOTOS SRINIVAS KURUGANTI ARCHIVE PHOTOS

THOUGH they are typically wary of the university, critics of free trade can claim some academic converts to their cause. Among them is Alfred E. Eckes, an economic historian at Ohio University, who spent the 1980s as head of the U.S. International Trade Commission (ITC), the agency that assesses how imports affect U.S. industry. Eckes is the author of *Opening America's Markets* (North Carolina, 1995), a revisionist history of U.S. trade policy that opens a window onto the debate over not only List (who receives much flattering attention in his book) but what the historical record reveals about free trade. During the 1996 presidential campaign, when asked why fellow conservative Phil Gramm disagreed with his trade philosophy, Pat Buchanan answered tartly, "Phil has a Ph.D. in economics. He doesn't know history. That's his problem." Eckes—like Fallows, Lind, and other modern-day Listians—would concur. Each of these critics has recently argued that, economic theory notwithstanding, the great industrial powers of the world (England, America, Japan) all passed through a phase of protectionism, and benefited from it. As Eckes puts it in *Opening America's Markets*, "Although most late-twentieth-century economists argue strenuously that free trade promotes a more rapid growth of GNP and exports than protectionism, historical statistics reveal a paradox.... Between 1870 and 1913, nations pursuing more protective policies (the United States and Germany) experienced higher domestic growth rates and more rapid export expansion than did free trade Great Britain." In a narrative replete with anecdotes certain to delight Buchananites—George Washington, we learn, pointedly donned an American-made suit at the first inaugural—Eckes insinuates that List and his cohorts have the facts of history on their side. Only after World War II did America, like Britain a century earlier, finally adopt unilateral free trade—and suffer calamitous deindustrialization as a result.

"Outrageous," "nonsense," and "absurd," shot back Douglas Irwin in a scathing review for *The Wall Street Journal*. While not disputing the growth rates cited by Eckes, Irwin, like most economists, attributes them to factors other than tariffs—higher rates of investment, technological change, fresh waves of immigration. "You might even say that the U.S. industrialized *despite* the tariffs," he quipped in an interview. To economists like Irwin, as to some historians, the past confirms exactly what economic theory predicts: Nations pursuing List's philosophy may win short-term growth in particular sectors, but protectionism shields industry from the useful spur of competition, fostering either gross inefficiency—witness twentieth-century India—or beggar-thy-neighbor nationalism and ruinous trade wars. Witness, in the latter case, the Great



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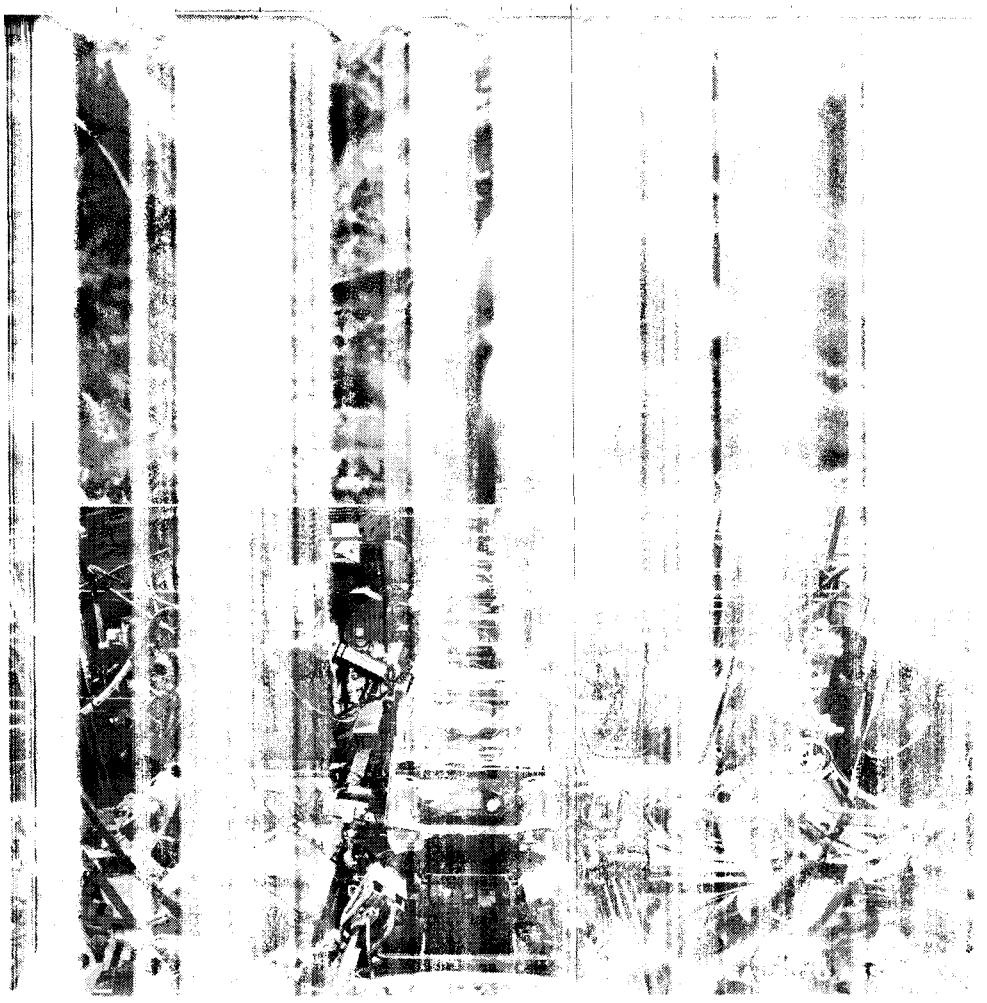

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Depression, which peaked shortly after Congress passed the infamous Smoot-Hawley Tariff Act of 1930, provoking a flurry of retaliation that exacerbated the economy's global meltdown. Some forty days before Smoot-Hawley's passage, 1,028 economists signed a petition urging Congress against any such action.

For this reason, Smoot-Hawley has long been a feather in the cap of free traders—and a thorn in the side of protectionists. Michael Lind, an outspoken critic of NAFTA and a List admirer, recently complained in *The National Interest* that "the U.S. cannot negotiate any trade treaty...without a host of journalists, politicians, and economists linking hands in a seance and summoning the Specter of Smoot-Hawley." The tariff certainly is well remembered: In their 1993 NAFTA debate, Al Gore handed Ross Perot a framed photograph of the act's architects. "They raised tariffs," the vice president declared, "and it was one of the principal causes...of the Great Depression." The Texas billionaire looked as though he'd been handed a live grenade.

But he shouldn't have, Eckes insists. Gore's view is little more than a quaint popular fable, Eckes argues in his book, noting that Smoot-Hawley went into effect *after* the 1929 stock market crash and did not provoke nearly the level of retaliation that is commonly assumed—an argument recently echoed by other economic historians, including Gertrud Fremling and Barry Eichengreen. Perhaps more importantly, Eckes is hardly alone in arguing that, historically, protectionism has not been inimical to economic growth. In his highly regarded study *Economics and World History: Myths and Paradoxes* (Chicago, 1995), the distinguished University of Geneva historian Paul Bairoch amasses a wealth of evidence against free-trade orthodoxy. "It is difficult to find another case where the facts so contradict a theory," Bairoch concludes. "In all [nineteenth-century] cases, protectionism led to, or at least was concomitant with, industrialization and economic development."

Irwin admits there is "a bit of a gap between economists and historians on this question." Yet even if one accepts Bairoch's view of the nineteenth century—which suggests that developing nations may benefit from a phase of protectionism—one may still wonder why some would invoke this history to challenge free trade in contemporary, postindustrial America, as Eckes did in a pro-Buchanan Op-Ed for the *The New York Times* last year. In other words, why should the infant-industries argument apply to adult economies? Tariffs may have worked in the past, but why now?

In his *Wall Street Journal* review, Irwin offered an unflattering explanation of Eckes's conversion to Buchananism. During his tenure at the ITC, Irwin noted, Eckes "spent week after week, month after month, year after year, listening to the complaints of import-competing producers about how predatory and unfair competition was destroying jobs and damaging the economy." The experience "deeply colored his view of international trade," since he heard anguished appeals from a small group of victims but never conversed with a broader group of "consumers and import-dependent industries" that benefit from free trade yet don't testify at the ITC. Further proof, Irwin was implying, that economists, not politicians, are best qualified to assess free trade's impact.

Eckes, not surprisingly, casts his experience in a rather different light. He did, in fact, arrive at the ITC a devout free trader, only to be regaled with "poignant descriptions of [the] import competition" that U.S. manufacturers were facing throughout the 1980s, particularly from low-cost foreign producers—accounts that "seemed to conflict with neoclassical trade theories found in many textbooks." Unlike armchair economists, he refused to explain away the plight of the victims. In a 1992 exchange with the economists Francis Bator and Richard Cooper in the pages of *Foreign Affairs*, the retired government official rebuked the "cosmopo-



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litical economic theories" espoused by the tweed set, who champion free trade at a safe remove from the "plant closings [and] job dislocations" he witnessed first-hand at the ITC.

"Many academics who come into government undergo an experience that makes them less doctrinaire in their approach to free trade," observes Clyde V. Prestowitz, president of the Economic Strategy Institute, a Washington, D.C.–based think tank that regularly dispenses advice to the government on trade policy. Prestowitz himself, like Eckes, spent much of the 1980s in government, working at the Commerce Department as Ronald Reagan's chief trade negotiator with Japan. (A subchapter to the debate over free trade might be titled "The Revolt of the Reaganites," many of whom strode into Washington wearing Adam Smith neckties only to emerge as outspoken critics of their purported icon.) In his influential 1988 book, *Trading Places*, Prestowitz marveled at economists who clung to free trade even as America's leading competitor, Japan, seemed to be clobbering one U.S. industry after another (semiconductors, VCRs, machine tools) by doing otherwise. "I was amazed by their doctrinaire attitude," Prestowitz remarked, arguing that the flood of imports from mercantilist Japan, which subsidized its own industries and closed its market to U.S. goods, was rapidly turning America into a deindustrialized "fourth world" nation—and rendering traditional economic theory suspect. Prestowitz today describes himself as a "free trader—in theory." In practice, he has frequently advocated government intervention in trade policy, locking horns with economists over the much debated issue of strategic trade.

STRATEGIC trade's provocative challenge to economic orthodoxy originated not among bare-knuckle policy makers like Prestowitz but among a small group of innovative trade theorists within the academy that—it so happens—included Paul Krugman. Building on research begun in the late 1970s, Krugman and several other economists, including James Brander and Barbara Spencer at the University of British Columbia, pioneered a new approach to trade theory that starkly challenged comparative advantage, the bedrock principle of free trade, and immediately reshaped the conversation on how America should deal with its leading trade partners.

According to the hallowed principle of comparative advantage—which was given its most eloquent summation in David Ricardo's 1817 *On the Principles of Political Economy and Taxation*—each nation naturally produces some things more efficiently than others: bananas in Honduras, wine in France, wheat in America. This is why, in neoclassical theory, unfettered commercial exchange yields benefits for all and also why most economists instinctively recoil when trade is portrayed as a form of ruthless zero-sum competition.

FRIEDRICH LIST

LIST OBSERVED THAT "THE WIDEST POSSIBLE GULF SEPARATES THE MEN OF THEORY FROM THE MEN OF PRACTICE WHEN IT COMES TO DISCUSSING FREE TRADE."

Yet in the mid-1980s, Krugman and other economists developed a set of innovative theoretical models that threw this very assumption into question. According to the new theory, in certain industries where profits are high and numerous countries compete over a market of limited size—say, airplanes—governments might actually *create* comparative advantage by subsidizing and protecting domestic firms, gaining national income at the expense of their rivals. This sounded very much like the Japanese approach to trade, and here it was receiving the imprimatur of neoclassical economists. The implications seemed radical. As Krugman announced portentously in a 1987 article, "Is Free Trade Passé?," appearing in the *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, "the case for free trade is currently more in doubt than at any time since the 1817 publication of Ricardo's *Principles*.... At least under some circumstances a government, by supporting its firms in international competition, can raise national welfare at another country's expense.... As businessmen have always said, and as economists have usually denied, a protected domestic market can—under some circumstances!—promote rather than discourage exports, and possibly raise national income."

The idea shook the field of neoclassical trade theory, and it may one day win Krugman a Nobel Prize—a supreme irony, since, for much of the past decade, the economist has relentlessly railed at policy makers and journalists for attempting to apply it. The celebrated economist has virtually disowned his most celebrated idea. "Trade is not about competition; it is about mutually beneficial exchange," he declares flatly in *Pop Internationalism*, blasting Prestowitz, the journalist Robert Kuttner, and others for ignoring comparative advantage and portraying trade as zero-sum warfare between competing nation-states.

So what happened to Krugman's ballyhooed embrace of the new paradigm of strategic trade? Kuttner mockingly suggests that Krugman "backed away from the implications of his own theory like a cat on a hot stove, because, if you say that comparative advantage doesn't explain everything, you're suddenly outside the club." Douglas Irwin, for his part, simply claims that Krugman's views "changed a bit."

But Krugman certainly won't admit to an about-face. He insists the only thing



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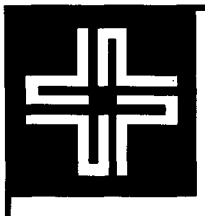
that has altered is his estimation of his audience—which has plummeted. From the beginning, he notes, the economists who developed strategic-trade theory were "cautious nonactivists" when it came to applying it, stressing that the potential costs of any strategic intervention had to be carefully weighed against the benefits. Yet these warnings, he complains, were blithely ignored by ham-handed policy wonks, journalists, and politicians. "I was a very naive and sheltered person back then," he half-jokingly explains. "Like most economists, I assumed that the formulation of policy was in the hands of people who were reasonable and clear-headed. When you get into the policy world, you discover that people just don't understand conventional trade theory."

Krugman bitterly laments how his subtly crafted theory was hijacked by nonacademics opposed to free trade. Prestowitz, in a 1992 *Foreign Policy* article, invoked it to advocate an aggressive combination of industrial policy and managed trade, with Washington actively subsidizing and protecting key industries and playing hardball to open Japan's markets. In the same year, Kuttner, a columnist for *Business Week* and the co-editor of an influential liberal policy journal, *The American Prospect*, penned an article for *The New York Times Magazine* that hailed a "new consensus" in favor of managed trade. For a while, it seemed like an accurate appraisal, as President Clinton hinted at a shift toward government subsidies during his 1992 campaign and promptly appointed Laura D'Andrea Tyson, a Berkeley economist and proponent of strategic trade, to head his Council of Economic Advisors. Less than a year later, however, Krugmanites could begin breathing a sigh of relief: Clinton was steering NAFTA through Congress and has since recast himself as a more ardent free trader than George Bush or Ronald Reagan.

ONE REASON Clinton could so easily make this transition is that America's relationship to East Asia has undergone a profound shift in recent years. Throughout the Reagan-Bush era, and during much of Clinton's first term, the fear that a rising Japan was overtaking a slumbering America pervaded the policy world. These days, although Japan still racks up enormous monthly trade surpluses with America, it is hardly the roaring engine of macroeconomic growth that once inspired such fear—which is perhaps why Prestowitz, among others, has backed off earlier proclamations that Washington should begin acting more like Tokyo. Japan's stagnant growth and tumbling stock exchange have, in fact, drawn knowing nods from Western economists about the burdens of sclerotic government intervention and protectionism. As a recent *Business Week* cover story proclaimed, "To many observers in and out of Japan, the market is sending a powerful message that the global economy is finally closing in on the country's protected, overregulated domestic economy." Japanese companies like Toshiba, Sony, and Minolta have even begun reaching out to low-cost foreign suppliers for parts and components once acquired from protected domestic firms—a signal that Tokyo, too, is inching toward free trade. To economists, this is a healthy sign of change. To Kuttner, it's a grim indication that, in the relentlessly competitive global economy, even governments like Japan's will have to loosen the reins on industry and will likely suffer the inequality and insecurity that

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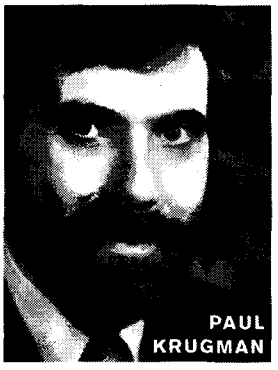


KRUGMAN BITTERLY LAMENTS THAT HIS OWN THEORY WAS HIJACKED BY ACADEMICS OPPOSED TO FREE TRADE

have become endemic in more laissez-faire countries like the United States and Britain.

ALL OF which brings us to the fractious question of how the fall of market barriers alters the economic well-being of workers and nations. Few issues have stirred deeper passions—or more discomfort—among economists in recent years. When Ross Perot warned that NAFTA would induce a "giant sucking sound," sending thousands of American companies scurrying across the Rio Grande to low-wage Mexico, it so perturbed economists, recalls Douglas Irwin, that many suddenly felt compelled to express public support for NAFTA, despite underlying reservations about the accord. "Economists originally weren't very enthusiastic about NAFTA," Irwin explains, "because, if you read the agreement, it was actually full of complicated provisions, some of which restricted trade." Only after Perot whipped up fears of a cataclysmic job drain did more than three hundred economists, Irwin included, sign a letter to President Clinton endorsing the agreement—a story promptly carried on the front pages of newspapers across the country.

It's not that economists deny that some U.S. companies will flee to Mexico once trade barriers fall; it's that most welcome the prospect, which they claim will enhance efficiency on both sides of the border. As the NYU economist Melvyn Krauss argues in his new book, *How Nations Grow Rich: The Case for Free Trade* (Oxford), "the export of low-skill jobs to Mexico can be expected to raise, not lower, U.S. national income, because it is a part of the redistribution of jobs within the United States from low to higher productivity." NAFTA supporters point to the rising volume of trade between the United States and Mexico and economic growth on both sides of the border. But Harley Shaiken, a labor economist at UC-Berkeley who now advises Congressman Richard Gephardt on trade issues, paints a less rosy picture, emphasizing that the U.S. trade deficit with Mexico swelled to a record $17.5 billion last year, while real wages in Mexico have declined markedly since NAFTA's implementation.

To Pat Choate, who was Ross Perot's 1996 running mate and now directs the Manufacturing Policy Project, a Washington think tank sharply opposed to free trade, it's galling, but by no means surprising, that economists overlook the downside. "Academic economists are a protected elite providing a patina for the multinational corporations that grow rich from free trade," he harrumphs. "And they don't even practice what they preach—they themselves have tenure, which amounts to a form of professional protectionism." (Choate himself, it's

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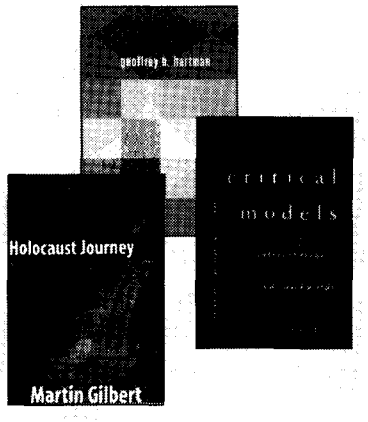


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worth noting, is hardly immune to the charge of serving monied powers: The think tank he operates is funded by numerous groups with a vested interest in protectionism, including the billionaire textile magnate Roger Milliken, a generous Buchanan supporter.)

The trouble with orthodox theory, Choate complains, is that "the workers of China and the workers of Mexico cannot organize. How do you have free trade with a country that's not free?" It's a question that virtually every critic of GATT and NAFTA—from Pat Buchanan (never much of a friend of *American* unions) to labor leaders (who are pushing for stronger provisions for workers' rights in trade accords)—have been echoing of late. So, too, have the millions of consumers who now associate Kathie Lee Gifford—as well as companies like Nike and Disney—with dingy Third World sweatshops and child labor.

An outrage? Not really, most economists believe. An article in *The New York Times* this past June noted that, among economists, sweatshops are typically viewed not as a grisly evil but as the first rung in the ladder of industrial development. "The overwhelming mainstream view among economists is that the growth of this kind of employment is tremendous good news for the world's poor," Krugman explains, noting that South Korea, and even the United States and England, passed through the sweatshop stage. The Harvard economist Jeffrey Sachs, returning from a trip to Africa, echoed this view. The uproar about sweatshops is, many economists believe, but a crude spasm of narrow-minded nationalism, the goal being to keep jobs in America and confine the rest of the world to rural impoverishment.

Three days after the *Times* article, Charles Kernaghan of the National Labor Committee, a leading anti-sweatshop activist, responded with an abrasive letter. "It might be helpful," Kernaghan mockingly proposed, "if these men tried working in a sweatshop.... To go to work in an industrial park in, say, Honduras, they would pass through metal gates by armed guards at 7:30 A.M. and leave 13 1/2 hours later.... Supervisors would scream and hurl garments in their faces.... If they tried to organize, they would be fired." Kernaghan laments that there's nothing in neoclassical economic theory—or, for that matter, in the GATT rules—that stipulates that nations should refrain from exploiting their workers (many economists, in fact, view cheap labor as the chief comparative advantage of impoverished states). Kernaghan adds that in a global economy, the exploitation of foreign workers hurts American workers too, since wages spiral downward for everyone.

Once again, few economists concur. In an influential 1995 essay in the *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, "Are Your Wages Set in Beijing?," Harvard's Richard Freeman announced that, indeed, "an economic disaster has befallen low-skilled Americans," whose real earnings have declined steadily for two decades. But free trade, Freeman explained, is not a "primary factor" in the decline of wages. That's mostly because the "vast majority of unskilled [U.S.] workers"—a full 85 percent—are employed "in nontraded goods, such as retail trade and various services. In such a world it is hard to see how pressures on wages emanating from traded goods can determine wages economy-wide."

Freeman concludes that free trade accounts for, at most, 20 percent of the rise in U.S. wage inequality—a figure that's now widely accepted among economists. Of course, critics point out that some of those same economists initially denied that


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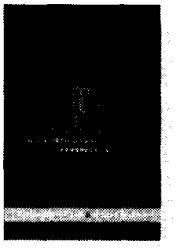

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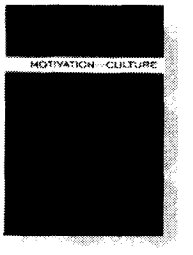


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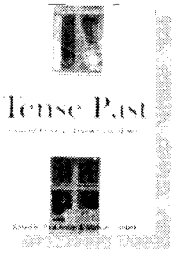


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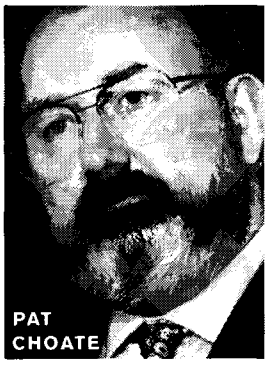
"ECONOMISTS DON'T EVEN PRACTICE WHAT THEY PREACH—THEY HAVE TENURE, WHICH AMOUNTS TO PROTECTIONISM," SAYS CHOATE


PAT CHOATE

free trade had *any* impact on wages. How much further can they backpedal?

IN FACT, a few economists have begun to raise sharp objections to the way their colleagues measure the impact of free trade. UCLA's Ed Leamer argues that, despite Freeman's and Krugman's claims, "the *volume* of imports is not that important." As trade barriers fall and the world economy integrates, he contends, a single global market begins to set the same price for all jobs at a particular skill level. In neoclassical theory, this is called factor-price equalization, and its effects can be drastic. "If you're selling apparel to the same market that the Chinese are selling to," Leamer explains, "you are effectively in competition with them. The wages of gardeners and other low-skilled workers are linked to those of the apparel workers, which are in turn connected to those of Chinese workers." In a series of technical papers on NAFTA, Leamer estimated that future trade agreements could lower yearly wages among unskilled workers by as much as one thousand dollars. He soon began receiving phone calls from NAFTA critics—who didn't know that he still supported the accord.

More recently, Adrian Wood of Britain's University of Sussex used a different set of assumptions to again upwardly revise conventional estimates of free trade's impact on wages. Wood promptly raised the question of whether his analysis might "unwittingly [be] giving ammunition to protectionists." "That is certainly a risk," he concluded, but "a guaranteed way to lose a public debate with a protectionist is to assert that imports are a minor influence on the labor market—something that few audiences of non-economists are likely to believe."

And then there is Dani Rodrik, an economist at Harvard who staunchly supports free trade but likewise warns his colleagues to acknowledge the social turbulence it can create. In a provocative new book, *Has Integration Gone Too Far?*, published by the pro–free trade Institute for International Economics, Rodrik wonders aloud whether globalization has stripped national governments of the vital power to tax footloose capital while rendering labor vulnerable to crushing international competition. To dampen the appeal of protectionism, Rodrik urges economists to address these problems with concrete solutions. Like Leamer and Wood (and, it's worth noting, Paul

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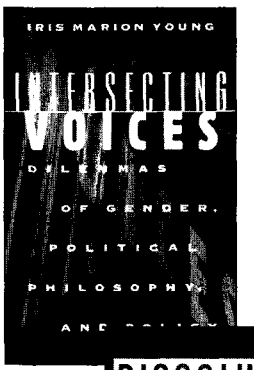


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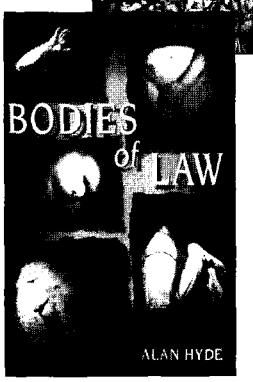
*Alan Hyde*




"Alan Hyde has produced a stunning critical anatomy of how the human body figures (and is figured) in American legal discourse."
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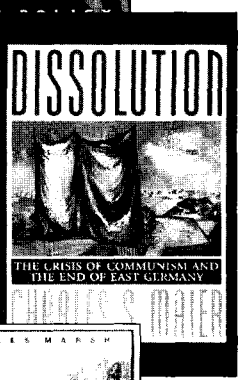


Against the backdrop of one of the great transformations of our century, the sudden and unexpected fall of communism as a ruling system, Charles Maier recounts the history and demise of East Germany. *Dissolution* is his poignant, analytically provocative account of the decline and fall of the late German Democratic Republic.

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*Jeffrey Burton Russell*

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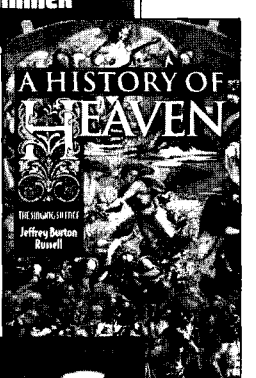


Well-known for his historical accounts of Satan and hell, Jeffrey Burton Russell here explores the brighter side of eternity: heaven. He stimulates our imagination with a history of how the joy of paradise has been conceived by writers, philosophers, and artists for whom heaven was an imminent reality. Russell not only explores concepts found among the ancient Jews, Greeks, and Romans as well as early and medieval Christians, but also suggests that the best way to approach the logic-defying concept of a place occupying neither space nor time is through poetry and paradox, and through the visions of such mystics as Bernard, Julian of Norwich, and Eckhart.

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Contributors include Morris Dickstein, Jason Epstein, Barbara Epstein, David Bromwich, Jed Perl, Mark Krupnick, Neale Reinitz, Elizabeth Hardwick, Mary Meigs, Roger Straus, Alfred Kazin, Michael C. D. Macdonald, James A. Sanders, David Remnick, Daniel Aaron, Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., Randall Kennedy, Andrew Delbanco, Toni Morrison, Louis Menand, Paul Berman, and Sean Wilentz.

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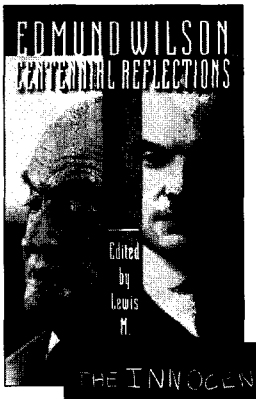


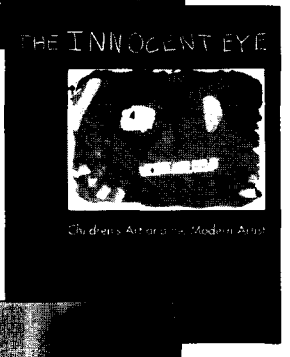


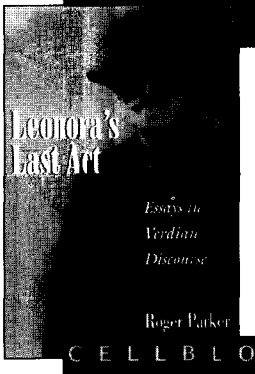

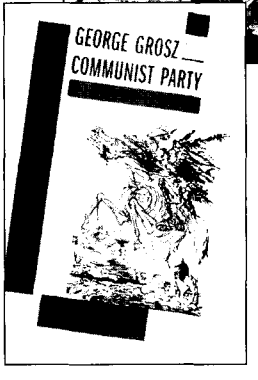


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***Princeton Studies in Opera***
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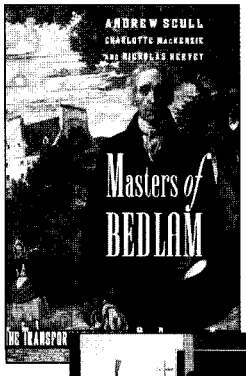


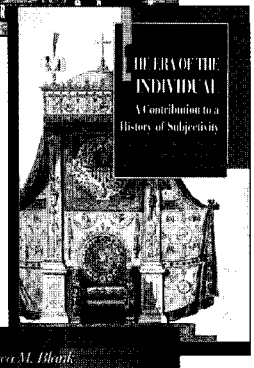


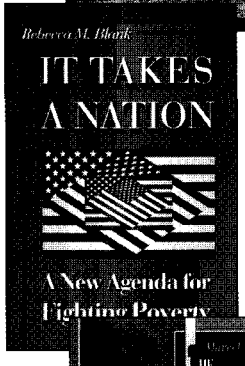


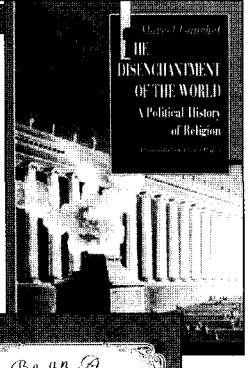


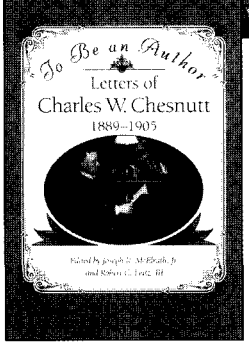


## The Era of the Individual

*A Contribution to a History of Subjectivity*

***Alain Renaut***

*With a Foreword by Alexander Nehamas*
*Translated by M. B. DeBevoise and Franklin Philip*

"Alain Renaut tells the story of the elimination of the [human] subject, bringing together, with astonishing virtuosity, pedagogical clarity and a sense of drama. . . . A book that one must read." —*Alain Finkielkraut, L'Événement du jeudi*

In *The Era of the Individual*, widely hailed as Renaut's magnum opus, the author explores the most salient feature of post-structuralism: the elimination of the human subject. While acknowledging some of Heidegger's misgivings toward modernity as legitimate, Renaut argues that it is nevertheless wrong to equate modernity with the triumph of individualism. Here he distinguishes between individualism and subjectivity and, by offering a history of the two, powerfully redirects the course of current thinking away from potentially dangerous, reductionist views of humanity.

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## The Disenchantment of the World

*A Political History of Religion*

***Marcel Gauchet***

*With a foreword by Charles Taylor*

"The scope, freedom of thought, and analytical rigor of this book make it essential reading."—*Jean-Jacques Courtine, University of California, Santa Barbara*

Marcel Gauchet has launched one of the most ambitious and controversial works of speculative history recently to appear, based on the contention that Christianity is "the religion of the end of religion." In *The Disenchantment of the World*, Gauchet reinterprets the development of the modern west, with all its political and psychological complexities, in terms of mankind's changing relation to religion. He views Western history as a movement away from religious society, beginning with prophetic Judaism, gaining tremendous momentum in Christianity, and eventually leading to the rise of the political state. Gauchet's view that monotheistic religion itself was a form of social revolution is rich with implications for readers in fields across the humanities and social sciences.

***New French Thought***
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December 1997. 272 pages.
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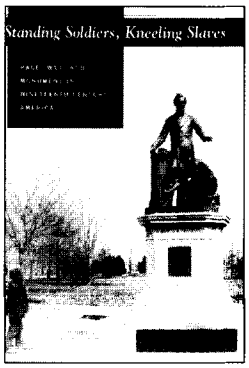
## Standing Soldiers, Kneeling Slaves

*Race, War, and Monument in Nineteenth-Century America*

*Kirk Savage*

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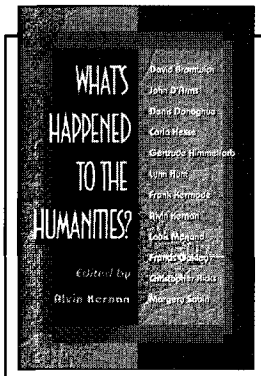


## What's Happened to the Humanities?

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*With a foreword by William Bowen and Harold Shapiro*

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This volume of specially commissioned original essays presents the thoughts of some of the most distinguished commentators within the American academy on the fundamental changes that have taken place in the humanities in the latter part of the twentieth century. The individual essays offer close observations into how the humanities have been affected by declining academic status, by demographic shifts, by reductions in financial support, and by changing communication technology. They also explore the effect of these forces on books, libraries, and the phenomenology of reading in the age of images.

The contributors are David Bromwich, John D'Arms, Denis Donoghue, Carla Hesse, Gertrude Himmelfarb, Lynn Hunt, Frank Kermode, Louis Menand, Francis Oakley, Christopher Ricks, and Margery Sabin.

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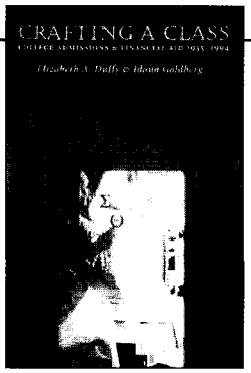


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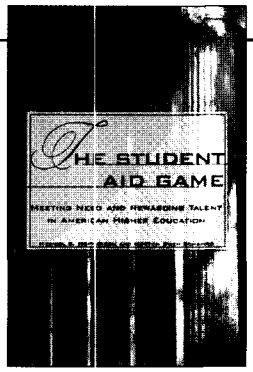


## The Student Aid Game

*Meeting Need and Rewarding Talent in American Higher Education*

*Michael S. McPherson and Morton Owen Schapiro*

Student aid in higher education has recently become a hot-button issue. Parents trying to pay for their children's education, college administrators competing for students, and even President Bill Clinton, whose recently proposed tax breaks for college would change sharply the federal government's financial commitment to higher education, have staked a claim in its resolution. In *The Student Aid Game*, Michael McPherson and Morton Owen Schapiro explain how both colleges and governments are struggling to cope with a rapidly changing marketplace, and show how sound policies can help preserve the strengths and remedy some emerging weaknesses of American higher education.

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Krugman), he believes displaced workers ought to be offered training programs and other assistance. But Rodrik goes further, emphasizing that multilateral trade agreements ought to include strong protections for labor unions and the environment—a notion that would strike many economists as a dangerous departure from orthodoxy.

Kuttner takes heart from the questions that some professional economists are raising about the impact of free trade. Still, he worries that most economists blithely disregard the threat that the free flow of capital poses to the welfare-state capitalism that has predominated in the West for half a century. He says: "What's really at issue is not just wages but the whole ability of a society to decide that it wants a mixed economy."

WILL free trade usher in a post-Keynesian reality in which, as Robert Heilbroner warns in *21st Century Capitalism* (Norton, 1993), "national governments... become increasingly unequal to providing the legal, monetary and protective functions that are their contribution to a well-working economy"? Regardless, national governments will have to reckon with the consequences of free trade. And so it's not surprising that the issue's shadow looms large over contemporary politics. Already, Al Gore and Richard Gephardt, presidential hopefuls for the year 2000, have carved out opposing positions on the matter, with Gore promising to expand Clinton's free-trade agenda and Gephardt signaling that he'll do no such thing until strong labor-rights provisions are cemented into trade accords.

Is Gephardt emerging as the true voice of the people—or as the spokesman for a narrow group of aggrieved workers and national businesses? Conversely, is Gore proposing what's best for the future—or what's best for the multinational corporations and international investors who stand to benefit?

In a sense, this is the subtext of the entire debate between the economists and free trade's popular critics. Both sides claim to speak for the greater good of society—and accuse their opponents of pandering to special interests. What places economists at a rhetorical disadvantage in these sparring matches is their professional tenet that reliable evidence comes not from the voices of people on the streets but from models and equations. Quite predictably, on an issue of such passionate engagement, with so much on the line, the professors find themselves accused of being aloof, detached, and indifferent.

Perhaps that's why Rodrik rather explicitly breaks from convention. In his book he frankly admits that "economics is notoriously bad at being able to quantify forces that most people believe are quite important." He proceeds to situate his analysis within not only the existing scholarly literature but also the maelstrom of current events: the convulsive 1995 strikes in France, the stirrings of nationalism in Europe, the Buchanan campaign. What happens on the streets, he's saying, is worth looking into—even if economic theory teaches otherwise. As he recently told *The Chicago Tribune*, "If the common people say something about the real world that is at odds with economic theory, it's probably the common people who have it right."

It's unlikely that Rodrik, himself a neoclassicist, actually believes his colleagues have it all wrong. But their cavalier dismissal of popular anxieties about the global economy, he warns, may end up removing them from a key public debate—and clearing the path for their most determined adversaries.

Eyal Press is a New York–based writer whose work has appeared in Newsday, The L.A. Times, The Nation, and other publications. His article "Nightmare on Twelfth Street: The New School Falls Into Chaos" appeared in the August 1997 LF.

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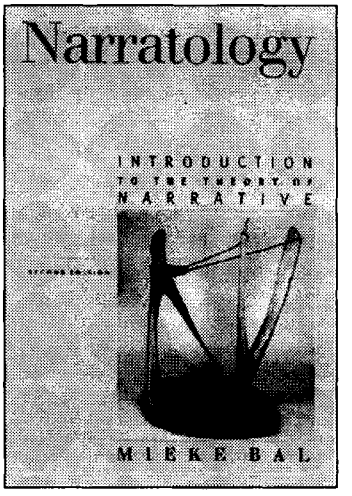


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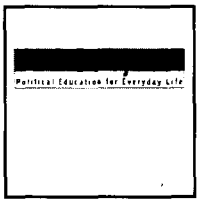

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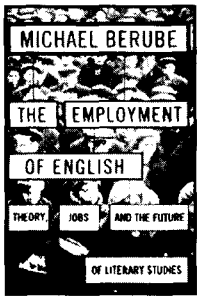


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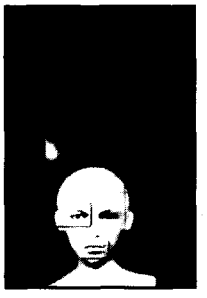

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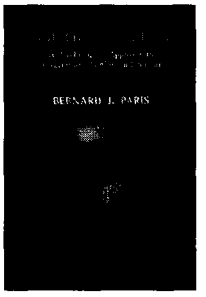


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# SINS OF THE POET

In the beginning was the poem. Three years ago, in his office at Old Dominion University in Norfolk, Virginia, a rising young Christian poet named Scott Cairns wrote a poem he titled "Interval With Erato." The poem depicts a poet making love to his muse, whose coy pillow talk transmits a wry critique of the foibles of contemporary American poetry. On a deeper level, Cairns wrote the poem to explore an issue that had been occupying him of late: the Christian relationship with the physical body. Cairns had a book in mind on the subject, his fourth volume

BY **KATHRYN ROBINSON**

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of poetry, in which "Interval With Erato" would appear as one of an arc of poems presenting Christianity as the ultimate reconciliation of the ancient spirit-body duality. The book would be called *Recovered Body.*

Last year, just as Cairns was writing his final poems for the book, he received notice that *The Paris Review* had accepted "Interval With Erato" for publication. Cairns amended his lengthy CV to include mention of this latest coup and sent it off with his application to Seattle Pacific University, a Free Methodist liberal arts college near Tacoma, his childhood home. The school was looking for a new creative-writing professor.

WHAT IT GOT instead was a scandal. After selecting Cairns and enthusiastically inviting him to a $50,000-a-year full professorship in the English department, top administrators happened upon "Interval With Erato." Disturbed by the poem's language, they hastily retracted their offer, notifying Cairns that his appointment would "compromise the moral and ethical foundation upon which our institution operates."

All hell broke loose on the evangelical campus. A furious Cairns demanded the full $50,000 promised in his contract. Professor Mark Walhout resigned his position as chair of the English department in protest. Morale among faculty, who had been increasingly frustrated in recent years by the ideological narrowness of the university's board of trustees, hit an all-time low. "This was a tragic and unnecessary mistake," Walhout says. "We had a chance to hire a terrific poet, and we shot ourselves in the foot."

Walhout now blames himself for his failure to anticipate the problem such a poem could create at SPU. But Cairns's abortive relationship with the university doesn't yield easily to any single explanation. The story is a tangled one, involving the historical mandate of a religious institution, a meddling board of trustees, and a president in a delicate bind. It's also the story of Christian academics pulled between the cultural expectations of their competing allegiances—grappling with the practical meaning of academic freedom in an institution that, in the words of one disgruntled former faculty member, "doesn't know whether it's a university or a church."

ANY visitor to SPU soon discovers that the social norms of modernity do not apply. In enrolling, students agree to abstain from drinking, smoking, and premarital sex. Dancing became acceptable in 1990—but only as an instructional, not a social, activity. Classroom discussions often center on issues of personal faith; regular chapel attendance is required. Walking into Tiffany Hall, the Victorian building housing the English department, a visitor encounters the same shaggy-haired professors and threadbare couches seen in lit departments across the land—only here, the visitor is likely to have the door opened for her by a student.

In this ecumenical era, when few Christians can identify the differences between Episcopalian and Lutheran doctrine, SPU is one of a dying breed of institutions where denomination still matters, and fiercely. The college was founded in 1891 by a group of Free Methodists, a small Protestant sect that broke off from mainline Methodism in the mid-nineteenth century over corruptions it saw in that church, from renting pews to supporting slavery.

Though they started out with a progressive agenda, Free Methodists have over time become much more socially conservative than their United Methodist brethren. Both partake of Methodism founder John Wesley's Holiness tradition, a commitment to faith in action. But where United Methodists emphasize the importance of social justice, Free Methodists stress individual morality and see themselves as part of the evangelical movement.

It was into this world that Cairns arrived this past January, having been chosen from nearly two hundred applicants to interview as a finalist for a creative-writing position. Cairns, the director of creative writing at Old Dominion, looked like quite a catch for SPU. His work had appeared in high-profile publications such as *The New Republic* and *The Atlantic Monthly* and had been frequently anthologized, most recently alongside the poems of Denise Levertov, Richard Wilbur, and Louise Erdrich in Oxford's collection of contemporary Christian poetry, *Upholding Mystery.* In Walhout's estimation, Cairns was one of the top Christian poets of his generation.

Walhout was not alone in his judgment. "I publish Scott whenever I can," affirms Richard Howard, the Pulitzer Prize–winning poet and poetry editor of *The Paris Review.* "He has found a way of speaking of extraordinarily serious and highly solemn matters with a kind of abandon and wildness that I find effective and touching." Howard hastens to distinguish between the terms "religious poet" and "devotional poet." "In some ways, Scott is the most religiously proper person you can imagine, but he's not very doctrinal in his poetry," Howard explains. "I don't think he'd be thought of as a comfortable Christian."

Cairns similarly defines himself in spiritual—not doctrinal—terms. Many of his poems, he says, "have to do with my own coming to terms, literally, with things that I think are beyond language." Over the years, his work has broadened from Christian apologia to incorporate his interest in scrutinizing contemporary American Christianity. In this last area, he fits in with a number of contemporary American poets inhabiting academic and Christian spheres—who, in Cairns's words, "will not relax their critical faculties to work over the difficult stuff of faith."

During his January visit to SPU, all of the major players from the faculty and administration interviewed him. Cairns met Tom Trzyna, dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at SPU, who himself writes poetry, and Philip Eaton, SPU's president. He guest-taught a class, during which he dazzled English professor and Faculty Status Committee chair Luke Reinsma. "He teased students, begged

IN WITH A SET OF AMERICAN POETS
SAYS, WILL NOT RELAX THEIR CRITICAL
OVER THE DIFFICULT STUFF OF FAITH."



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INTERVAL WITH ERATO

BY SCOTT CAIRNS

*That's what I like best about you,* Erato sighed in bed, *that's why*
*you've become one of my favorites and why you will always be so.*
I grazed her ear with my tongue, held the salty lobe between my lips.

*I feel like singing when you do that,* she said with more than a hint
of music already in her voice. *So sing,* I said, and moved down to the tenderness at the edge of her jaw. *Hmmm,* she said, *that's nice.*

*Is there anything you* don't *like?* I asked, genuinely meaning to please. *I don't like poets in a hurry,* she said, shifting so my lips would achieve the more dangerous divot of her throat.

*Ohhhh,* she said, as I pressed a little harder there. She held my face
in both hands. *And I hate when they get careless, especially when employing second-person address.* She sat up, and my mouth

fell to the tip of one breast. *Yes,* she said, *you know how it can be—*
*they're writing "you did this" and "you did that" and I always assume,*
*at first, that they mean* me*!* She slid one finger into my mouth to tease

the nipple there. *I mean it's disappointing enough to observe the lyric is addressed to someone else, and* then, *the poet spends*
*half the poem spouting information that the* you*—if she or he*

*were listening—would have known already, ostensibly as well as,*
*or better than, the speaker.* I stopped to meet her eyes. *I know just*
*what you mean,* I said. She leaned down to take a turn, working my chest

with her mouth and hands, then sat back in open invitation. *Darling,* she said as I returned to the underside of her breast, *have you noticed how many poets talk to themselves,* about *themselves?*

I drew one finger down the middle of her back. *Maybe they fear*
*no one else will hear or care.* I sucked her belly, cupped her sopping
vulva with my hand. *My that's delicious,* she said, lifting into me.

*Are all poets these days so lonely?* She wove her fingers with mine
so we could caress her there together. *Not me,* I said, and ran my slick hands back up to her breasts. I tongued her thighs. I said, *I'm not*

*lonely now.* She rubbed my neck, *No, dear, and you shouldn't be.* She clenched, *Oh!*
*a little early bonus,* she said; *I* like *surprises.* Then, *so few poets appreciate surprises, so many prefer to speak only what they, clearly, already know, or think they know. If I*

*were a poet... well, I wouldn't be one at all if I hadn't found a way to get a little something for myself—something* new

*from every outing, no? Me neither,* I said, if somewhat indistinctly.
*Oh!* she said. *Yes!* she said, and tightened so I felt her pulse against
my lips. She lay quiet for a moment, obviously thinking.

*Sweetie,* she said, *that's what I like best about you—you pay attention,*
*and you know how to listen when a girl feels like a little song.*
*Let's see if we can't find a little something now, especially for you.*

them, bantered with them," Reinsma recalls. "One almost had the sense of a wizened rabbi cajoling students to see for themselves what he had seen."

Under examination that week was more than Cairns's scholarly credentials. Reinsma explains that, "aside from issues of teaching and publication, we need to ask in this community whether a candidate's Christianity seems to be sincere and vital and whether it promises to express itself in the classroom and in the writing the candidate does." He adds: "The community has a legitimate need to know how heartfelt, how deep a candidate's Christian commitment is."

To that end, SPU asks prospective faculty to supply a statement of faith as it relates to education. "I am intentional and candid in acknowledging Christ as Lord of the world and of my life," read Cairns's statement in part. "I work deliberately, if not always with complete success, at making my worship and my work indistinguishable activities. I have a strong sense that God's reality is beyond any of my attempts to name it. I have an even stronger sense that this is no cause for despair, no excuse for apostasy.... I have developed a taste for uncertainty, a taste for a peculiar species of doubt which nurtures rather than undercuts faith." On his task as a Christian teacher: "To open to the student a way of seeing his or her life in the world as a sacred, creative act."

Across campus, Cairns's interviewers were readily convinced of his theological fit with their institution. "Cairns is an elder in the Presbyterian church, but that wasn't the only thing that convinced us he was a committed Christian," Reinsma says. "It was also his poetry, which deals with central issues of the Christian faith." In his poem "The Embarrassment of Last Things," for instance, Cairns looks with rueful bemusement at the eschatological obsessions that keep many contemporary Christians from addressing matters in the here and now: "That the world never ended meant we had to get / out of bed after all, swallow another dose / of stale breath with our coffee, scrape the grim ice / from our windshields."

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His last night on campus, Cairns read from his work before an intimate gathering of faculty and students. "It was immensely moving in a spiritual way," recalls English professor Susan VanZanten Gallagher. During the reading, Cairns mentioned to the group that one of his poems was soon to come out in *The Paris Review*. It was, he told them, an erotic poem. "I didn't think anything of it," says Gallagher. Later, Cairns spoke privately about "Interval With Erato" with English department chair Walhout, who assured him it would not have repercussions. "I told him that I felt our administration and faculty would defend the freedom of a poet and artist to depict erotic situations, as long as they were not pornographic," Walhout says. "It seemed a minor point."

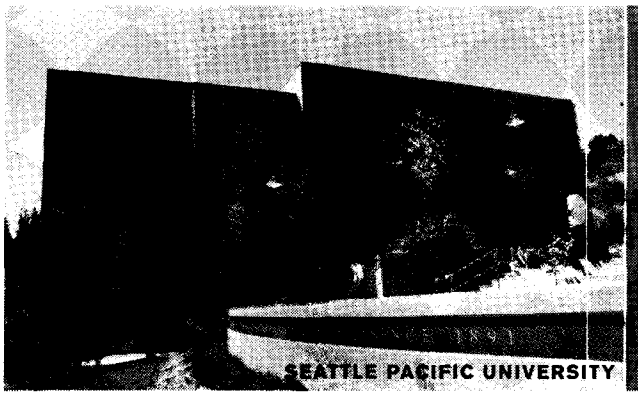
Early in February, Cairns received the job offer from SPU. Elated, he accepted immediately. He missed Tacoma and was eager to return with his wife, Marcia Vanderlip, and their two children: "We were going back home."

ABOUT a week later, Tom Trzyna—the poetry-writing dean—was browsing at a Barnes & Noble, where he picked up the latest edition of *The Paris Review*. In its pages, Trzyna, who had not attended Cairns's poetry reading, thumbed his way to "Interval With Erato." What he discovered was not what he expected from his devout young hire:

> *Darling,* she said as I returned to the underside of her breast, *have you noticed how many poets talk to themselves, about themselves?*
>
> I drew one finger down the middle of her back. *Maybe they fear no one else will hear or care.* I sucked her belly, cupped her sopping vulva with my hand. *My that's delicious,* she said, lifting into me.

Cairns's poem is a nod to Horace, who used this form of discourse to poke fun at his peers in *Ars poetica*. "It's an old convention: The poet invokes the muse, then the muse does all the heavy work, critiquing the poet's contemporaries," he explains. Erato, the Greek goddess of lyric and love poetry, not only plays the part of outspoken muse but also represents the recovery of the body—"the animality, the sexual love," says Cairns—which he believes finds its ultimate reconciliation in Christianity.

Although the sequence of the next events is unclear—Trzyna refused to be interviewed—it is apparent that the dean brought the poem to the attention of President Eaton. Eaton was in a tough spot. Only a year earlier he had been promoted (following stints as vice president of academic affairs, then provost) to become SPU's fifth president in fifteen years. He prided himself on an ability his predecessors weren't known for: placating the more conservative factions on campus while maintaining standards of intellectual openness and rigor. And yet, the revelation of a newly hired professor's erotic writing risked making it seem as if Eaton were himself challenging proper Christian restraint.




If the job of university president can be described as endlessly mollifying pissed-off constituencies, then the job of Christian-university president is an even stickier wicket. Indeed, Eaton defines his position as one big balancing act: He must keep the school from "slipping over to a fortress mentality, separating ourselves from the world," while refraining from mindlessly "adapting to the surrounding culture" of secular America. Like any president of a university, he spends a large part of his time assuaging disgruntled trustees, faculty, staff, administrators, alumnae, and students—not to mention parents.

But Eaton's toughest constituency was the trustees. All boards have a conservative bent, charged as they are with preserving an institution's mission. But on the SPU board the conservatism is extreme. Of the thirty-two trustees, half, by charter, must be Free Methodists. Some of the other half come from independent Bible churches, which tend to be fundamentalist. Critics say that over the voices of more moderate trustees, the tone of the board is set by this contingent of vocal biblical literalists—who Eaton foresaw were likely to consider Cairns's *Paris Review* contribution less as poetry than as pornography.

DEAN Trzyna immediately contacted English chairman Walhout for several sotto voce conversations about the poem problem. Walhout defended Cairns's work. "Judging Scott's fitness to teach here on the basis of one poem, taken out of the context of his complete body of poetry, is a little bit like taking the Song of Songs out of the context of the Bible and then pronouncing the Bible a dirty book," Walhout explains. "One vein in Scott's poetry is an affirmation of embodiment and incarnation as essential components of Christian theology. That's the theological context of this poem, with its celebration of human sexuality. The poem isn't even about sex. Sex is the metaphor."

Though he had never written anything so explicit, Cairns had long been fascinated with the Christian doctrine of the incarnation of God and the implications of such a doctrine for the sacredness of the body. "In the Orthodox perspective, marriage is not called a sacrament, it's one of the *mysteries*," Cairns explains. "It implies that two human beings, mysteriously coupled, somehow

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perform and make vivid some holy truth about a relationship with God." In "Loves," a poem that appeared earlier in *The Paris Review*, Cairns envisioned an epistle Mary Magdalene might write to the Pharisees who chided her for kissing Jesus' feet. "I think that you / forget the very issue which / induced the Christ to take on flesh," the poem reads. Mind-body dualism, it suggests, is a Greek conceit, utterly alien to Hebrew and Christian thinking. "It was about Magdalene's encounter with a fully human being," Reinsma explains. "It was a poem trying to ask what it meant for Christ to be fully human as well as fully divine."

Sacred or no, reports one faculty member close to the issue, it was the bit in "Erato" about the sopping vulva that Eaton was having trouble getting over. "Here's Phil, a Presbyterian, been in office not even a year—he's just picturing himself in front of a Free Methodist bishop having to defend that line. It drove him up the wall." Within days Eaton began seriously to consider revoking Cairns's contract.

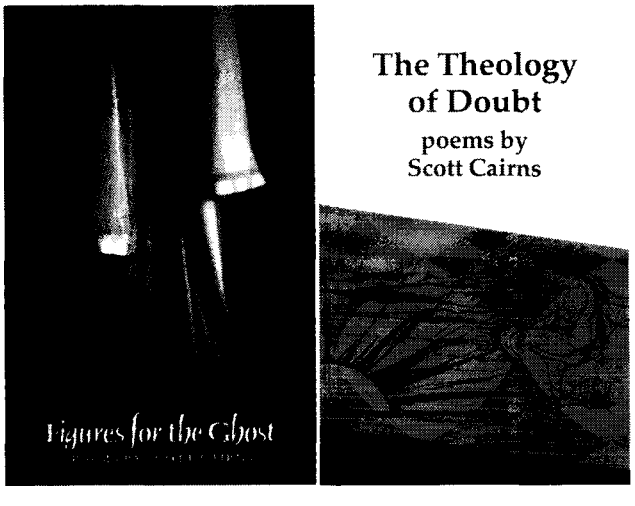
MEANWHILE, SPU was simmering with other business. One hundred academics from Christian universities around the country descended on the campus for a four-day symposium on evangelicalism in higher education titled "The University Through the Eyes of Faith." Under discussion at the symposium was a problem that in recent years had become increasingly troubling for Christian thinkers: the anti-intellectualism of the evangelical movement.

This topic had been on the ascendancy in evangelical circles since the 1995 publication of Wheaton College professor Mark Noll's controversial book, *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind,* in which he argued that closed-mindedness had impoverished the evangelical enterprise. Hostility to the enlightenments of secular academe, Noll argued, sapped the life of the mind that had so enriched evangelicalism in earlier centuries. In its place arose a stubborn insistence on literal truths, such as six-day creationism, that has both marginalized and theologically weakened evangelicalism.

At the SPU symposium, many conferees agreed that evangelical universities must do more to invigorate the intellectual life of their faith without succumbing to the strong leftward pull that has in recent times liberalized mainstream colleges and secularized Christian ones. "The intellectual landscape is well documented with schools that started distinctively as religious institutions—the Yales, the Harvards, the Princetons—and have become completely secular," explains religion professor Frank Spina.

SPU's last two decades have been marked by an effort to buff up its academic standing without diluting its core identity. "We are motivated by a great passion for Jesus Christ, on the one hand, and a great passion for learning, on the other," explains Eaton in this year's university catalog. "These things come together in amazing ways; they even bump into each other at times. Now that's exciting!" In reality, however, these bumps between secular and religious imperatives have frequently produced more consternation than excitement.

As a result, the school's embrace of the mainstream has been tentative at best. In the 1980s, for example, scholarly credentials for the first time began edging out denominational correctness in hiring criteria. Episcopalians, Presbyterians, even Roman Catholics entered the fold. But the board could only withstand so much diversity. In the 1990s, the school's Methodist affiliation has, at the board's insistence, taken on renewed significance. Otherwise top-notch candidates for jobs have been turned down because of a perceived lack of religious fervor. During his 1993 tenure review, Mark Taylor, a popular religion professor, was asked up front about his opinions on feminism and homosexuality. His responses led the board to overturn the department's recommendation for tenure.




AS symposium delegates were heading back to their home campuses freshly motivated to intellectual rigor, Walhout telephoned Cairns with an alarming piece of news. Trzyna and Eaton wanted to speak with him about "Interval With Erato." Cairns promptly called Trzyna and got the sense that the dean was looking for ways to defend the poem to possible critics.

Cairns talked with Eaton and began to feel as though the president himself was one of those critics. "He wanted to understand why I felt the need to write it, questioning what my purposes were," Cairns recalls. He was not bothered by the president's probing; indeed, it led him to reconsider his work. "That's when I began to doubt the poem myself, since my purpose was not to offend." Eaton asked Cairns for a letter of explanation about the poem, and their conversation ended warmly.

The next day, February 25, Cairns faxed Eaton the requested letter. "In short, I have come to see the poem as a mistake," the letter read. As he explained later from his home in Virginia, "The context of the apology was that, having been alerted to ways in which certain members of the community might be offended by the poem, I would apologize, because that's not my purpose. On the contrary, my purpose is evangelical. My typical audience is agnostic or atheistic intellectuals who happen to read literature. Over the years, I've discovered a lot of people in that group who are drawn to reconsider the proposition of Christianity on the basis of a poet's willingness to introduce it. I'm conflicted about the poem; I think it's a very good poem, but I think I might have written one that was as good that didn't offend in that way." The sexual language might have been replaced with something subtler, Cairns allows. "I might have made better use of euphemism and suggestion. I guess I was just having too much fun evoking the playfulness of the coupling."



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Having offered his apology, Cairns was optimistic. But on March 7, Eaton dropped a bomb: He had decided to rescind Cairns's contract. Walhout called with the news. "I was in shock," Cairns recalls. "We had already planned on moving to Vashon Island. I had my bike route worked out from the ferry landing. We were all ready to go. I had resigned from Old Dominion." Not knowing how far along institutional channels his resignation had progressed, Cairns spent the following days worrying about whether he'd have work at all the following year.

Word of Eaton's decision lit through Tiffany Hall. "I was dumbfounded," Susan VanZanten Gallagher recalls. "I understood that this was a sensitive issue, and I understood how the poem could be seen as offensive. I wasn't surprised at the debate. I was surprised at the outcome." On March 10, Walhout resigned as English department chair, citing the revocation of Cairns's contract as the precipitating factor. "A protest was warranted," Walhout says. "I thought it was a terrible decision, and I was upset I was not consulted."

The letter dated March 11 that Cairns received from Eaton formally retracting the $50,000-a-year offer was crisply legalistic: "Any professor who took a similar action in this community would be considered in violation of the standards we hold for those who are providing leadership and modeling Christian values for our students." Cairns's appointment would "compromise the moral and ethical foundation" of the university. The letter offered Cairns $5,000 in exchange for a release from future claims.

"The language just floored me because it suggested that my very presence on campus would damage the moral foundations of the institution," Cairns recalls. "I took that very personally. By this point, anger and resentment were building big time." Cairns sat down and drafted an angry letter to the SPU administration in which he requested a settlement in the amount of the full $50,000.

THE MOOD was dark in Tiffany Hall after the news of Cairns's unhiring had sunk in. Why did Trzyna have to make an issue of the poem in the first place? And why didn't Eaton consult the English faculty before making his decision? "Once I got past feeling incredulous, I was just sad and tired," Reinsma says wearily. "Of course this is a case of academic censorship. I don't know how to resolve that."

Dean Trzyna, aware of the malaise, sent a letter to the English department on March 12 that began, "Dear friends and enemies." Trzyna wrote, "I wish I had never seen the poem. Having seen it, I believe it was my duty to Scott and to Phil Eaton to [ensure] that this work would not hurt either of them." Trzyna argued that "Interval With Erato" would eventually have come to the attention of the board, if only at Cairns's tenure review, and thus Eaton's decision only hastened the inevitable. "In hiring decisions, my primary concern is for the candidate. It was our duty to protect Scott by determining if we were inviting him to a genuine tenure-track position, or rather inviting him to a temporary position and perhaps some embarrassment and grief."

Trzyna characterized Eaton's "agonizing consideration" as finally pragmatic: Could he or could he not defend the poem to the board? "Some people on campus argue that we should not be ruled by the specter of the board," Trzyna wrote. "But the words 'the board' are an icon for a collection of things: a real and powerful board of trustees working to develop a relationship with a president who has been in office less than a year; a set of values

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supported by the board in countless decisions; and so on.... This is the board [that] is pressing hard on issues of fit and Free Methodism at the same time it is sitting on the Faculty Handbook and thinking about reviewing tenure. These things matter to the future of the university, and it is acceptable to weigh them. More important, we need to care about the values foundational to the institution, including its Holiness tradition. Sometimes we wish it were otherwise—I understand that. But that is who we are."

Finally, Trzyna couldn't resist a jab at Cairns's defenders: "With all due respect, the statement that the poem is 'not truly pornographic' but 'pornographic in the self-critical Petrarchan tradition' is not going to fly with a Free Methodist bishop."

Perhaps, critics noted. But wasn't Trzyna currently writing a book on forgiveness?

AS IT turned out, it was Cairns who turned the other cheek. Back in Norfolk, he struggled to understand SPU's decision. "I realized they were in a tight spot, that there was no real way they could have had me there," he says. "I think Phil, who was really in an impossible situation, was looking out for my future." Cairns dropped the demand for the full $50,000, and an undisclosed settlement was reached. "I feel very warmly toward everyone I met on SPU's campus. I'm even coming to the point where I understand the board of trustees," he says, explaining that his childhood in a fundamentalist Baptist church has left him with an understanding of a type of piety he nevertheless does not share. "I'll be honest," he laughs. "I haven't worked out in my head yet how I feel about the poem. But I do feel accountable for the results."

"I've always had an interesting relationship with my fundamentalist roots," Cairns explains. "I've loved those people, and it would never dawn on me to write something that would upset them. On the other hand, I'm starting to get a glimpse of what it means to be an artist. And I know that what an artist cannot do is edit himself before he creates something. Christians have to trust that there really is a God, and that God really will take care of the outcome. What we're called to do in the meantime is to proceed with the gifts we have, throw them into the arena, and be sensitive to the corrective pressure. I believe this can happen at a Christian university as well as anywhere else. But maybe it can't happen at SPU."

ALTHOUGH Cairns decided not to fight SPU, questions linger. How can the university claim to uphold free inquiry? Formally, SPU adheres to the same AAUP Statement of Academic Freedom vouchsafed by most universities around the country. To that statement, the school recently added a clause affirming that any "religious limitations" on scholarship should be clearly stated in writing at the time of a job search. But then, SPU does not clarify what those limitations are. "In the hiring process, we try to be clear what we're for rather than what we're against," Eaton explains. "The 'can't do this, can't do that' system is not what we're trying to do." In lieu of clear rules, explains one professor, the scholarship of SPU faculty is subject to a single guiding principle: "It should be Christian."

On its face, that's a defensible standard. "I think private institutions with particular convictions have a right to say 'This is who we are' and expect employees to have some degree of correspondence with that conviction," says Dr. Les Steele, a professor of religion at SPU. "Now, does that mean complete uniformity? No. There has to be some liveliness. But they do have a right."

Furthermore, dogmatism is hardly the sole province of religious institu-


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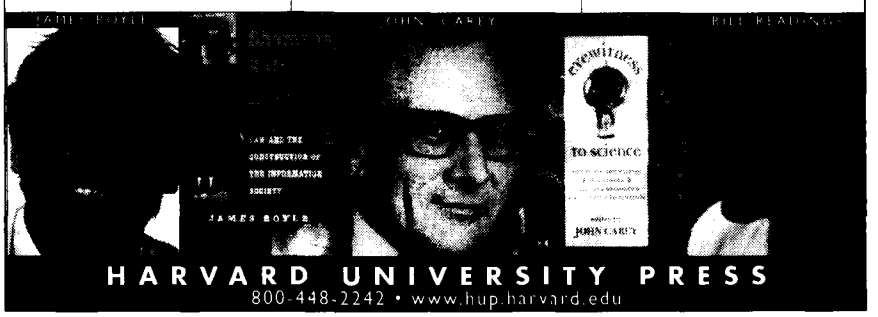


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tions. One SPU professor cites the case of *Bishop* v. *Arenov*, in which a conservative Christian professor at the University of Alabama was forbidden from telling his students about his faith. "I doubt very much if he would have been policed if he had told them he was a self-affirming gay man," says the professor. "Every institution polices its boundaries. They just happen to be in different places."

And yet, SPU's hazy standards have allowed ad hoc appraisals and the board's litmus tests to run the show. The result, so keenly felt by faculty members, is a university limited by an extremely narrow conception of Christianity. One professor who begged anonymity described the atmosphere on campus as one of denial, secrecy, and fear. "I've never been in an institution where there was so much fear among the faculty, but all covered with this smiley-face mission of moving ahead with the evangelical program."

For his part, Luke Reinsma holds that teaching at a Christian university can be a uniquely valuable experience—provided it doesn't involve judging authors against an orthodox checklist. "I think that's an extraordinarily hackneyed way of going about Christianity in the classroom," he says. "I ask students to write papers comparing and contrasting Greek and Hebraic religion in order to show that the Greeks are a part of who we are as Christians. I teach Chaucer in order to show a Christian who walks from London to Canterbury, this life to the next, feet firmly planted on the ground, commenting on the ills of society, laughing at them—yet doing it all while embracing life."

For Scott Cairns, this is the way it should be. "I don't make any bones about it: I'm a Christian! I love God!" he says from the Old Dominion campus, where he was recently awarded tenure. (He is currently seeking a publisher for *Recovered Body*, the book in which "Interval With Erato" will appear—unaltered.) "I don't always know what that means, but I'm always trying to learn. That's why I write poems: not to express previously held convictions but to uncover, to discover, my subconscious suspicions about truth. I don't think I could work otherwise."

**Kathryn Robinson is a reporter for *Seattle Weekly*, where an earlier version of this article appeared.**


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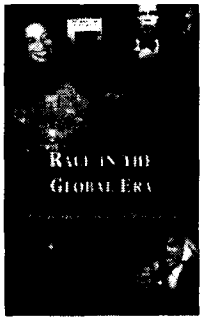


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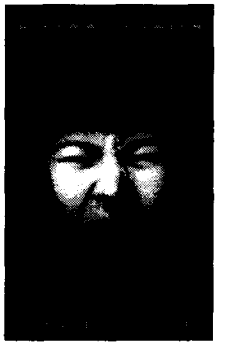

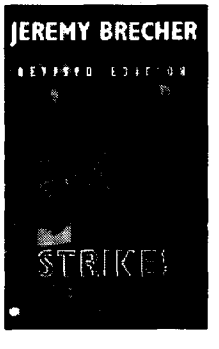


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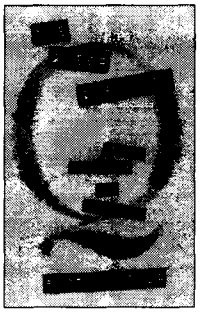

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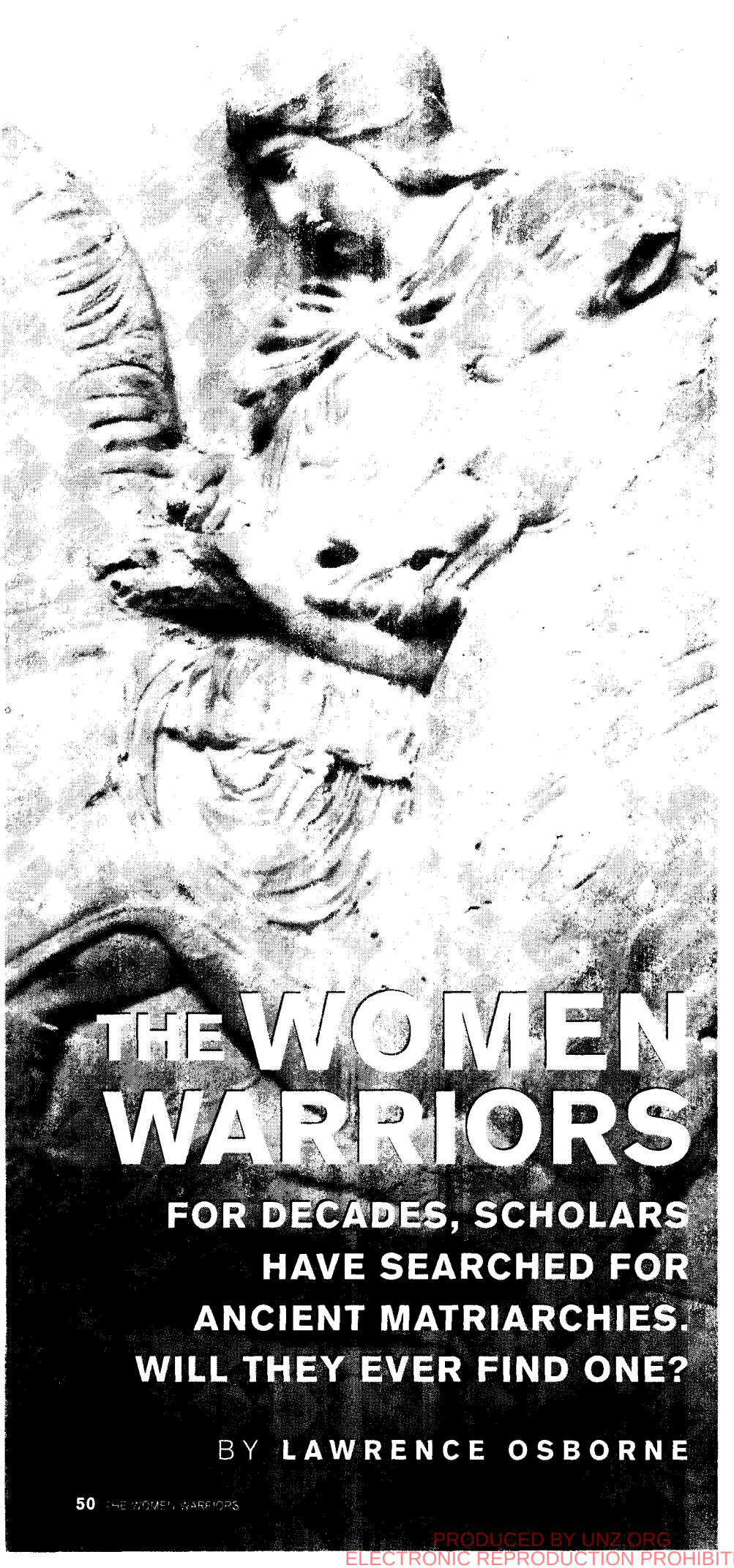

# THE WOMEN WARRIORS

## FOR DECADES, SCHOLARS HAVE SEARCHED FOR ANCIENT MATRIARCHIES. WILL THEY EVER FIND ONE?

BY **LAWRENCE OSBORNE**

ON THE FRIEZES OF THE PARTHENON we see them in their flowing chitons, wielding short swords and javelins like Olympic athletes. Later Hellenistic friezes, like those on the Thessaloniki sarcophagi, depict them in seductive poses, female warriors with the curves of courtesans. According to Herodotus, Greek soldiers fought them—a glamorous and lethal race of one-breasted military dervishes—at the battle of Thermodon, by the Black Sea. The Scythians called them *Oiorpata,* or "man killers." But when Achilles killed their queen, Penthesilea, at the siege of Troy, he fell in love with her dying face.

The Amazons are among our oldest and most potently ambiguous myths. So persistent is their hold on the Western psyche that when the Spanish navigated a huge river in South America in 1542 they sent back reports of Amazon sightings and the river eventually acquired their name. Then, for nearly five hundred years, *nada.* The Amazons passed quietly into the realm of myth, where they appeared likely to remain.

Or so it seemed, anyway, until archaeologists working on a dig on the Eurasian steppes made an unexpected find. Between 1992 and 1995, a team led by Jeannine Davis-Kimball, director of the Center for the Study of Eurasian Nomads, in Berkeley, California, excavated a site of Neolithic kurgans (burial mounds) near Pokrovka, on the Russia-Kazakhstan border. Last January, Davis-Kimball published an account of the dig in *Archaeology* magazine: an essay accompanied by maps and photographs describing her evidence that female warriors roamed the steppes approximately twenty-five hundred years ago.

Inside the kurgans, the archaeologists found remains of both sexes, but it was a group of female skeletons that captivated them: women buried with daggers and swords. At an average of five foot six, the women were exceedingly tall for their time. (Modern American women, by contrast, average five foot four.) Arrayed next to one young female was a quiver containing forty bronze-tipped arrows; the skeleton itself had bowed leg bones, possibly, Davis-Kimball speculated, from a lifetime spent in the saddle. Lodged beneath the rib cage of another was a bent arrowhead—testimony, perhaps, to a violent death in battle.

News of the Pokrovka burial site made headlines and set off a flurry of specula-

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tion. ANCIENT GRAVES OF ARMED WOMEN HINT AT AMAZONS, proclaimed *The New York Times*. In fact, Davis-Kimball was careful to tell the *Times*, these women were probably not the warrior women of ancient legend; after all, they were discovered more than one thousand miles east of where the Greeks allegedly fought the Amazons. Indeed, their significance is likely to be of a more far-reaching sort, revitalizing an old debate about the origins of patriarchy and perhaps renewing a long-discredited quest for a feminist Atlantis, a prehistoric civilization in which women held as much (if not more) power than men.

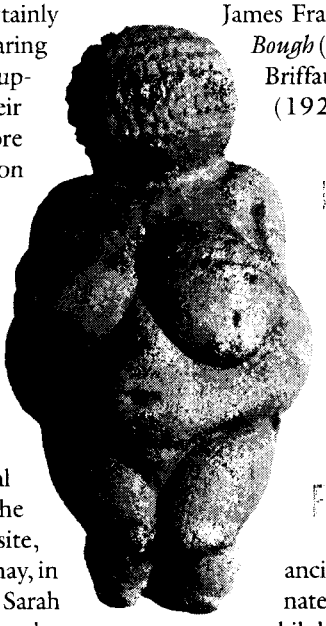
"These kurgans are not proof of matriarchy by any means," says Davis-Kimball. "But matriarchies might nevertheless have existed." While she underscores that the labels "matriarchy" and "patriarchy" reflect a peculiarly modern conception of power and gender relations, she notes that "there is evidence from iconography in both art and archaeology to suggest that non-patriarchal societies have indeed existed in the past." She adds: "These nomad societies of the steppes certainly seem to show some kind of role sharing between the sexes, even in the supposedly male arena of warfare. Their gender roles, I would say, are more fluid. And, at least now, the question is increasingly wide open."

Russian archaeologists, Davis-Kimball points out, have worked on other kurgan sites in the region since the 1950s, but whenever they came across women buried with swords and daggers they either refrained from interpretive speculation or assumed that the weapons were there for purely ritual purposes. The bowed legs and the spent arrowheads at the Pokrovka site, however, suggest that TV's Xena may, in fact, have some real-life precursors. Sarah Nelson, an anthropologist at the University of Denver and an expert on East Asian archaeology, puts the case more strongly. "Male archaeologists have been digging up high-caste military burials for years and describing them as male, when in fact they were frequently female," she says. "This might be the significance of the Pokrovka finds: Universal patriarchy, ironically enough, may turn out to be the ultimate male myth!"

By challenging some of our most basic assumptions about the history of gender roles in Western culture, Davis-Kimball's discovery gives new impetus to questions that have long troubled her field. If, as most anthropologists and archaeologists believe, women are subordinate—however subtly—to men in every known society today, how and why did patriarchy arise? Have men always been the more powerful and dominant sex in human societies, or does the historical record suggest otherwise?

IF THESE questions make today's scientists uneasy, it is with good reason. Inferring hard facts about relations between the sexes in ancient societies on the evidence of skeletal remains and pottery shards is a risky undertaking. Nevertheless, sweeping speculation about the social politics of ancient cultures has a long tradition in archaeology, one whose influence continues to be felt today.

Among the most widely held notions of *fin de siècle* scholars was a belief in a mother-loving golden age lurking somewhere in Europe's distant past. Both Sir James Frazer in *The Golden Bough* (1890) and Robert Briffault in *The Mothers* (1927) hinted at an ancient, female-dominated idyll. The Swiss philologist Johann Jakob Bachofen (1815–1887) in his monumental *Mutterrecht und Urreligion*, first published in 1926, declared "mother-right" the origin of culture. Bachofen's study of Roman funerary art, undertaken in the 1840s, convinced him that Roman law itself, that bastion of patriarchal thought, contained elements that could only have come from a distant matriarchal past, among them the sacrosanct notion of matrimony still with us today. Bachofen elaborated a romantic vision of pre-patriarchal history, inferred largely from a meticulous study of myth.



During the first half of this century, in an attempt to enhance the discipline's scientific reputation, archaeologists gradually abandoned myth-based speculation for a more sober regime of empirically verifiable observation. Armed with masses of statistics on optimal foraging strategies and population migrations, partisans of the New Archaeology—as the movement came to be called—restricted themselves to cautious assertions about prehistory in the dispassionate, third-person rhetoric of science.

There was one archaeologist, however, who found little of value in the rigors of her field, a woman with no patience for the graphs, statistics, and detached tone of the discipline's scholarly journals. In its sweeping scope and grand claims about ancient matriarchy, the work of Lithuanian archaeologist Marija Gimbutas had more in common with Bachofen's freewheeling conjectures than with the dry science of her peers. Gimbutas, who died in 1994, was a professor of archaeology at UCLA and an early expert on Neolithic cultures of southeastern Europe. During her lifetime, her belief in a lost female Arcadia—supported, she claimed, by thousands of recovered artifacts—gained only a small foothold in academe, primarily among radical feminist scholars like herself. "Of course you can reach some conclusions using statistics," Gimbutas said in 1987, defending her bold approach, "but if you do not have a vision as a person, if you are not a poet, or an artist...you will be just a technician."

In 1974, she published *Gods and Goddesses of Old Europe* in which she expounded her theory. Ancient Europe, she declared, had been inhabited by a culture that was "matrifocal and prob-

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ably matrilineal, agricultural and sedentary, egalitarian and peaceful." This edenic society was entirely destroyed by violent Indo-European nomads or Kurgan peoples (named by Gimbutas for their burial mounds—virtually all that remained of them) toward the middle of the fourth millennium B.C. (Ironically, these Kurgans belonged to the same culture as Davis-Kimball's warrior women—though Gimbutas saw them as patriarchal villains.)

*Gods and Goddesses of Old Europe* features large numbers of photographic plates, which Gimbutas invokes as she takes the reader through a summary tour of some of the thirty thousand artifacts of a long-vanished Neolithic Europe: mysterious stumpy "goddesses" in bird masks or wrapped in snake coils, vases painted with bees, butterflies, and dogs, and delicate freestanding stone mushrooms. "These symbols remain the only real access to this invigorating, earth-centered, life-reverencing worldview," she wrote. Taking her cue from Bachofen, she argued that ancient Europe had its own female-inspired iconography and civilization long before any influence from Asia or Egypt.

In *The Language of the Goddess: Unearthing the Hidden Symbols of Western Civilization* (Harper & Row, 1989), Gimbutas added essays to her color plates. Bearing titles such as "The World View of the Culture of the Goddess," the essays laid out an almost Atlantean view of the Old European order. "Its people did not produce lethal weapons or build forts in inaccessible places," she wrote. Instead, inspired by the gentle influence of the goddess, they lived in "comfortable houses," in an "age free of strife." This glorious age ended suddenly and violently, writes Gimbutas, with the arrival of the Kurgan marauders. In her view, their invasions brought a proto-Indo-European language to Europe, as well as previously unknown scourges, such as warfare, military technology, and—worst of all—patriarchy. Graves in southeastern Europe, she wrote, reveal evidence of suttee—a term that Gimbutas borrowed from the Hindi practice of immolating widows on their husbands' funeral pyres. The invaders, she believed, engaged in the sacrificial killing of women and children, burying them with a dominant male.

It was all downhill from here. Gimbutas's revisionist history dismisses ancient Greece as a culture of "absurd" images and the High Middle Ages as a grim hell that "can boast of greatest creativity in the discovery of tools and methods of torture." And this last, unfortunate period, she asserted, was only "the beginning of the dangerous convulsions of androcratic rule which 460 years later reached the peak in Stalin's East Europe with the torture and murder of fifty million women, children and men." The Stone Age, by contrast, was, in her conceit, an era of irreproachable feminine piety.

GIMBUTAS'S goddess theory enjoyed greater currency among feminist theorists in the humanities than in her own field. In her influential polemic *The Chalice and the Blade* (Harper & Row, 1987), for example, cultural historian Riane Eisler posits the existence of an ancient "gylanic" culture, distinguished by the equal rule of men and women. This period, marked by high cultural achievement, was supplanted some five thousand years ago by a baleful "androcratic" regime, an event that, borrowing from Gimbutas, Eisler blames on a violent Kurgan invasion:

> At the core of the invaders' system was the placing of higher value on the power that takes, rather than gives, life. This was the power symbolized by the "masculine" Blade, which early Kurgan cave engravings show these Indo-European invaders literally worshiped. For in their dominator society, ruled by gods—and men—of war, this was the supreme power.

Dismissed by Emory University historian Elizabeth Fox-Genovese in *The New York Times* as little more than "absurdities," this breezily apocalyptic history has nevertheless been swallowed, albeit more soberly, by other feminist scholars. For example, in *Paradoxes of Gender* (Yale, 1994), Judith Lorber, a sociologist and professor emerita at Brooklyn College, postulates thousands of years of peaceful non-patriarchal horticulture in southeastern Europe followed by a kind of gloomy oppression scenario, with the erstwhile egalitarian populations transformed by warlike men into a vast exploited class of abused "workers, sexual partners, child bearers, and emotional nurturers."

Inspired by Gimbutas, Lorber relies on artifacts, such as the Neolithic goddess sculptures, to justify her claims for an original non-patriarchal society. "These goddess idols have a great significance, I think. Women unquestionably lost their status at some point, a loss that is still with us," she explains. She stresses, however, that women were probably venerated in these early cultures because of their food-producing and childbearing roles—she endorses the theory that they invented both beer and bread—not because of any monolithic system called matriarchy.

Although many contemporary archaeologists would support Lorber's conclu-

JEANNINE DAVIS-KIMBALL

sions about women's social roles in early cultures, most are wary of endorsing Gimbutas's Kurgan invasions as the cataclysm that destroyed the ancient order. In her own field, Gimbutas's influence was short-lived, limited to a handful of scientists and a handful of sites in eastern Europe, including the Neolithic city of Çatal Hüyük in Anatolia, Turkey, and the Minoan palace at Knossos. Most scientists remained deeply skeptical.

"Gimbutas just leaped all over the place, making all kinds of unsupported assertions," says Brian Fagan, an archaeologist at UC-Santa Barbara, echoing a frequent criticism of the Lithuanian's work. "When it comes to the social structures of prehistoric cultures, we're dealing with intangibles." Mary Lefkowitz, a professor of classics at Wellesley College and an authority on women in ancient Greece, is equally critical. "Patriarchy is not a conspiracy to which you can ascribe dates and generalizations," she says. "Gimbutas's



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story to me is just that: a story. You cannot say, 'Patriarchy brought in the Iron Age and oppression.'"

To her critics, Gimbutas's interpretation of the evidence she collected—the thousands of artifacts documented in photographic plates in her books—is highly suspect. In *The Faces of the Goddess* (Oxford, 1997), a painstaking and exhaustive account of female deities in early cultures, Lotte Motz, an expert on Germanic mythology, argues that images of men and animals are just as prolific as goddess imagery in early European cultures. "There clearly was no introduction of warrior gods and warrior values," she writes sternly, "no imposition of a patriarchal system, and no humiliation of the Goddess." Lauren Talalay at the Kelsey Museum of Archaeology in Ann Arbor, Michigan, claims that Gimbutas's work was as marred by gender bias as that of her Russian peers in the 1950s. Many of the "goddess" figures of the Neolithic, Talalay argues, are either neuter or hermaphroditic—displaying both female breasts and male genitals. Unfortunately, she says, the definitively female statues are more elaborately decorated and, as a result, have been paid disproportionate attention by scholars. "I certainly don't think we can speculate about the social structures of Neolithic Old Europe on the basis of ambiguous figurines," she says. "The conspiracy notion of goddess worship followed by later male dominance is glamorous and politically expedient, but the archaeological record doesn't prove it in the least."

For many scholars, the Pokrovka warrior women serve as the final nail in Gimbutas's coffin, putting her male-marauder theory permanently to rest. "We have this macho myth about the so-called Kurgan nomads, that they were hierarchical warmongers and so forth," says Claudia Chang, an archaeologist at Sweet Briar College, who works on Kurgan graves in central Asia. "But in fact, as these recent excavations are showing, their kinship system often *favored* women and enabled them to enter the military and social elite."

WEAPONS AND A FEMALE SKELETON FROM A KURGAN GRAVE AT POKROVKA

COURTESY OF JEANNINE DAVIS-KIMBALL

OF COURSE, once the invasion theory is discarded, there remains the question of how patriarchy spread. The answer is unlikely to be simple. The Pokrovka burial mounds date from 500 B.C. to 200 A.D., making them roughly contemporaneous with the glory days of male-dominated imperial Athens. At the time, says Lefkowitz, Athens was indisputably patriarchal, a culture in which men effectively owned women and controlled their assets. In this case, she explains, patriarchy was probably a result of the Athenians' obsession with racial purity and with keeping the city's wealth in the hands of its own citizens. "It was their pursuit of pure citizenship," says Lefkowitz, "that made them obsess about the patrilineal bloodline. To control those lines they had to control women directly. They had to know who the fathers were."

This is a very different picture of female social roles from the one Davis-Kimball has inferred from her Pokrovka kurgans—a society in which women, not just men, apparently held military and social power. The simultaneous existence of nomadic warrior women *and* subjugated Athenian housewives suggests that two thousand years ago, relations between the sexes varied enormously from one population to the next. So why and when did patriarchy become the universal norm?

Among the most promising alternatives to Gimbutas's apocalyptic scenario is a gradualist model, found in the work of Columbia University anthropologist Sherry Ortner and others, which posits a slow and inevitable transition from prehistoric egalitarianism to male-dominated modernity. In 1972, Ortner published an essay in *Feminist Studies* titled "Is Female to Male as Nature Is to Culture?" Strongly influenced by Simone de Beauvoir and often cited as the beginning of feminist anthropology in the United States, Ortner's essay declared flatly that "the search for a genuinely egalitarian, let alone matriarchal, culture has proved fruitless." Nevertheless, Ortner theorized, there must be some explanation for women's subor-



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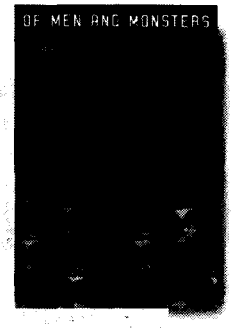
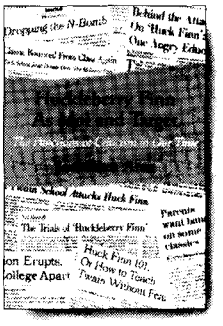
dination to men, a situation she claimed was universal regardless of the variable relative power of women.

Although she wished to disregard any explanation smacking of biological determinism, Ortner concluded that the ubiquity of male domination had its roots in the facts of sexual reproduction. Women are nearly everywhere associated with nature because of their role in procreation. (Women, as de Beauvoir put it, are more enslaved to the species by biology.) Furthermore, Ortner argued, all societies concoct rituals that aim to manipulate nature in the interest of culture. Notions of purity and pollution, evident in taboos connected with menstruation, create a gendered opposition between nature (dirty women) and culture (clean men) attesting to a powerful societal impulse to control nature's threat. Physically unhampered by their role in reproduction and therefore free from any symbolic association with nature, men are assigned an antagonistic value—namely, that of culture itself, whose duty it is to assert that control. In an essay published in her book, *Making Gender* (Beacon Press, 1996), Ortner elaborates:

> Men emerge as "leaders" and as figures of authority, vis-à-vis both women and other men, as a function of engaging in a variety of practices, only some of which are predicated on power, including trade, exchange, kinship networking, ritual participation, dispute resolution, and so forth. That is, male dominance does not in fact seem to arise from some aggressive "will to power," but from the fact that—as Simone de Beauvoir first suggested in 1949—men as it were lucked out: their domestic responsibilities can be construed as more episodic than women's and they are more free to travel, congregate, hang out, etc., and thus to do the work of "culture."

Ortner's essay described an inexorable progression from biological fact to symbol

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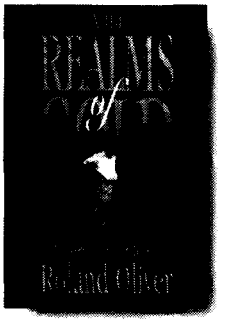


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PATRIARCHY, SAYS ORTNER, "AROSE AS A CONSEQUENCE OF ARRANGEMENTS WHICH WERE ORIGINALLY PURELY FUNCTIONAL AND EXPEDIENT."

SHERRY ORTNER

to the gender stereotypes that enjoy nearly universal currency today. Patriarchy, she says, "arose as an unintended consequence of arrangements which were originally purely functional and expedient. That we demonize it as part of contemporary feminist politics unfortunately only confuses the issue." Many anthropologists—including feminists—were struck by Ortner's thinking; her work has enjoyed considerable influence in the field. "By and large," says Meg Conkey, a Berkeley anthropologist, "we now think of patriarchy as a by-product of technological and social upheavals."

One scholar who has followed Ortner's lead is Elizabeth Barber, a professor of archaeology and linguistics at Occidental College in Los Angeles. Concentrating on a single technology—textile production—in ancient cultures, Barber has used a gradualist model to trace the evolution of gender roles in early human societies. In her patient and beautifully elaborated book *Women's Work, the First 20,000 Years* (Norton, 1994), Barber uses textile remains to re-create the often unrecorded lives of women in ancient societies frequently characterized as patriarchal.

Barber concludes that two fundamental conditions were necessary for patriarchy to emerge. First, there was long-distance trade in metal ores, an activity that, she claims, could be more easily conducted and monopolized by men, since women, burdened by infants and small children, couldn't travel long distances. Second, there was a "secondary products revolution" around 4000 B.C., in which domesticated animals that had traditionally been raised for consumption were kept alive and exploited for their secondary products, including milk, wool, and drafting power. As a result, nutrition and clothing improved, and

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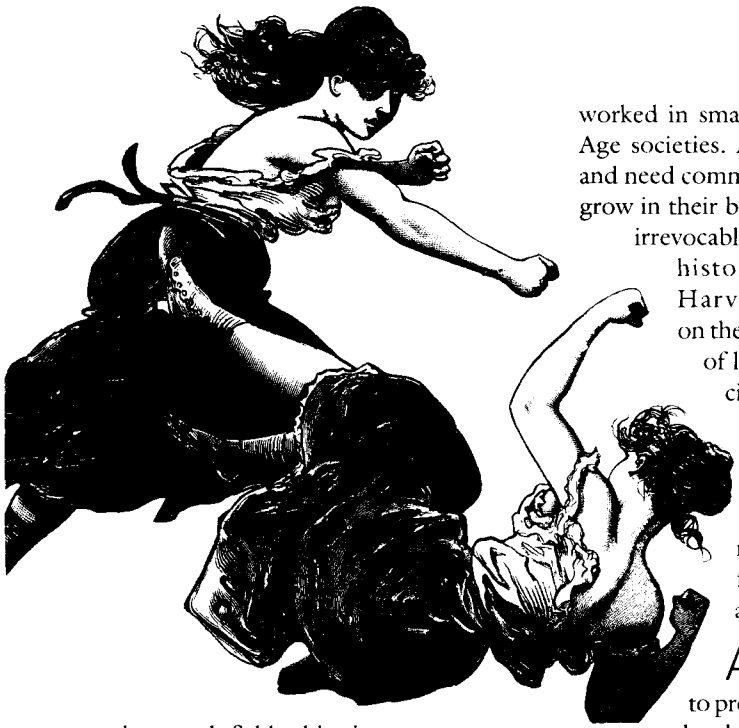

large-scale field cultivation became possible. This last development, she explains, was necessarily men's work as well. Echoing Ortner, Barber views the division of labor and gender as "an inevitable evil once subsistence farming had been left behind." She adds: "The communal, non-hierarchical model only worked in small, relatively poor Stone Age societies. As soon as people want and need commodities which they can't grow in their back yard, it breaks down irrevocably." Nicola Di Cosmo, a historian of East Asia at Harvard, thinks Barber is on the mark. "Gender divisions of labor were probably efficient and so were adopted as a matter of course," she says. "Warfare arises from a competition for resources as trading networks expand—not from some innate male aggression."

ACCORDING to proponents of the gradualist school, patriarchy is less a male conspiracy to keep women down than a necessary by-product of a society in which progress increasingly depends on mobility and brute strength. Teenage girls and nursing mothers were simply impractical candidates for the heavy lifting required to build an infrastructure. Despite its sober tenor and considerable political appeal to some—neither sex is to blame for men having more power today—the gradualist model is still very much a working hypothesis, one that sounds plausible (certainly more so than Gimbutas) but that the historical record has yet to verify.

In fact, it may be easier to test the gradualist theory against the future than against the past. After all, if revolutions in technology once made dominance by men—and thus patriarchy—inevitable, it follows that when machines replace bodies altogether, as they have arguably begun to do today, patriarchy may well disappear. Indeed, this is exactly what Ortner, among others, predicts. "Just as technological evolution created patriarchy," she says, "so technology now has the power to cancel it out because it obviates physical strength and equalizes the sexes."

While the future is sure to generate enough data for an informed analysis, the seven thousand years that lie between the emergence of the first Neolithic villages in Turkey and the urban patriarchy of classical Athens remain frustratingly


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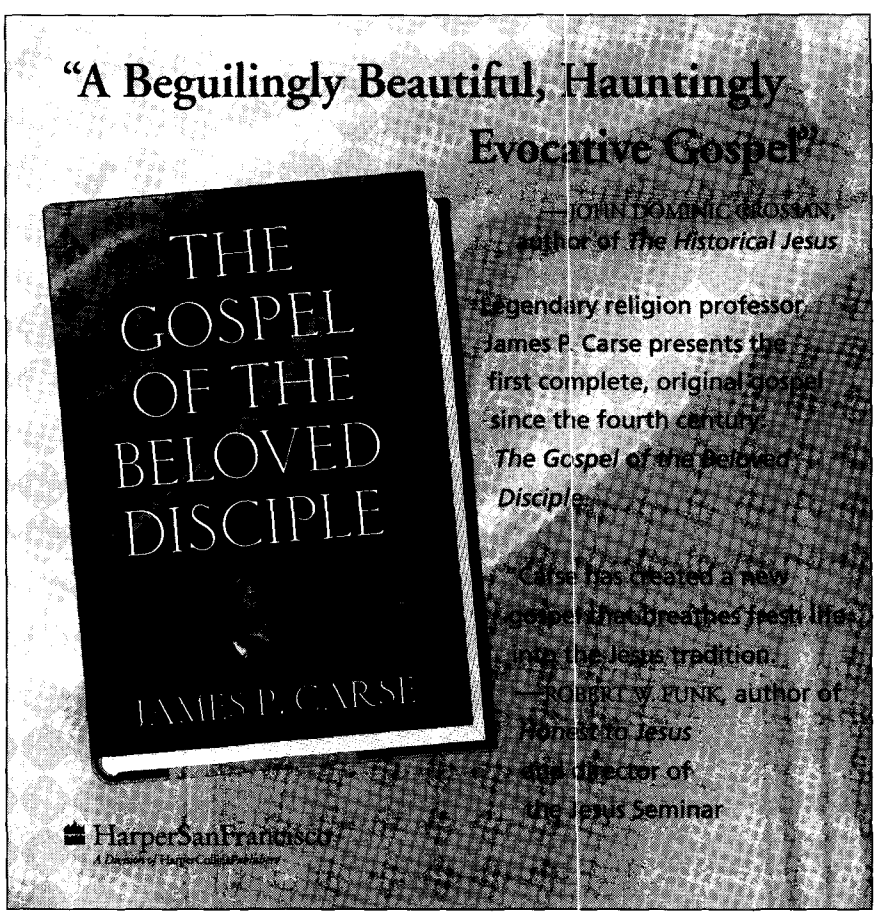
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obscure—a quagmire of informed speculation, contradictory evidence, and wishful ideological thinking. Will Davis-Kimball's Kurgan women illuminate this murky chapter in human history?

The answer, of course, depends on whom you ask. Barber, for one, says, "The Pokrovka finds are bound to change our picture of the sexes in pre-history." Di Cosmo agrees: "The social order in the nomad cultures may have been much more flexible than it became with regard to gender roles. Who knows, perhaps the Amazons have a basis in historical fact after all. It's certainly interesting to note that Herodotus's ethnographic descriptions of this region have now been largely confirmed by archaeology. It's a fascinating question, whether he was right about the Amazons as well."

As for Davis-Kimball, she prefers to continue her Gimbutasian quest for full-fledged matriarchies and Amazons rather than embrace the modest new paradigms supported by most of her peers. Over the summer, she conducted extensive digs in the Xinjiang Province of China. There she found what she is convinced are well-preserved "priestess mummies," part of a group of enigmatic Caucasian burial sites that Chinese archaeologists have unearthed over the last decade in the Takla Makan Desert, and which she believes are the remains of an ancient culture dating to around 2000 B.C. The significance of this Eurasian culture (to which no name has yet been given) is its evidence of the powerful social positions occupied by women: It seems women were shamans and priestesses, perhaps even warriors. Some of their implements, such as cultic spoons and mirrors, as well as the spiral tattoos still visible on their mummified faces and hands, are apparently similar to those uncovered in Pokrovka. This older Eurasian culture may even have influenced the later nomads with its example of female prestige.

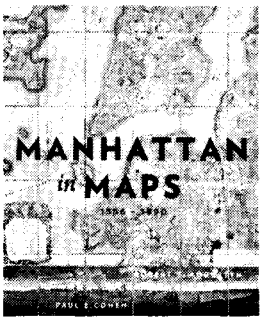
On a long trip afterward through the museums of central Asia, Davis-Kimball says she found evidence of female warriors and priestesses "all over the place." In July and August, however, while digging in Moldova at sites particularly beloved by Gimbutas, Davis-Kimball concluded that the evidence for a goddess culture there was weak. The quest for an ancient matriarchy, she decided, should take a different tack.

"I think Gimbutas may have been wrong about the mother goddess per se," says Davis-Kimball. "But she may have been right about an underlying, unbroken tradition of female cultic power and wisdom, which has been suppressed since the Middle Ages and especially since the Industrial Revolution. I found evidence for it all over Asia. A friend of mine was even cured of a backache in Ufa by a female shaman! The question of matriarchy should not be dismissed by any means. It should be an open question because archaeology up to now has been so slanted against investigating women in history. Men, after all, have always been afraid of women with power."

Of course, Davis-Kimball may only be giving new life to old myths. "I think she is spearheading a campaign for the revitalization of Gimbutas," says Berkeley's Meg Conkey. "Unfortunately, it is a reminder that popular culture and mythology are as much a springboard for archaeology as the other way around."

Then again, who knows. The tribe of Penthesilea may still have a few surprises for us hidden in its quivers.

**Lawrence Osborne is the author of *Paris Dreambook* and *The Poisoned Embrace*, both published by Vintage. His article, "Does Man Eat Man? Inside the Great Cannibalism Debate," appeared in the April/May 1997 issue of *LF*.**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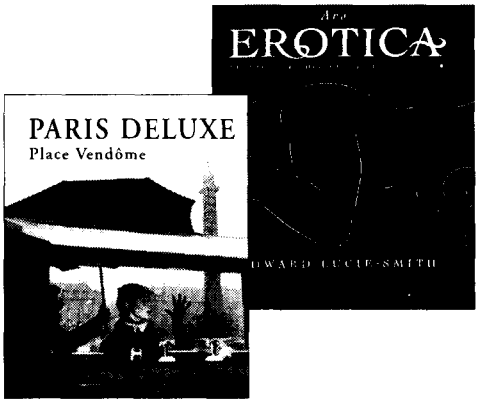


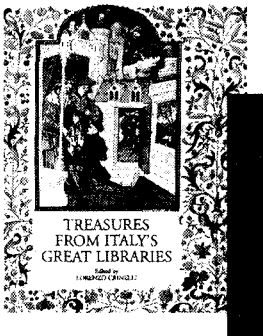

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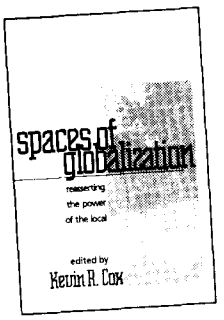


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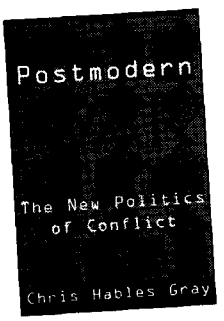


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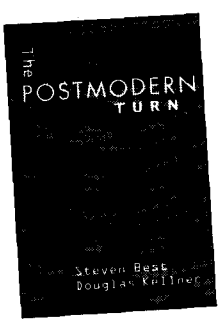


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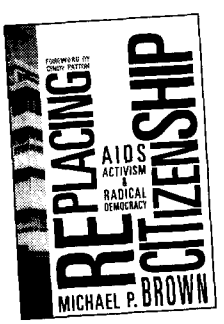


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# IN DEFENSE OF NOSTALGIA

talgic is an occasion of some importance. Isn't it time this much abused sentiment received its due? For centuries it has been the *bête noire* of every forward-looking intellectual, right, left, or center. Surely the longing for times lost deserves to be treated as more than a symptom of intellectual weakness. Surely the devotees of a past Golden Age deserve as much credibility as those whose Golden Age lies in the future. Why grant legitimacy to one form of sentimentality and not the other?

One plausible answer is that progressive sentiment has been consistent with intellectual fashion, while nostalgia has been decidedly dowdy—an affair sponsored by Colonial Dames and Sons of the American Revolution. But hostility to nostalgia is deeper than a dislike for frumpy dowagers; it is entwined with the roots of the modern worldview. The word itself was popularized during the eighteenth century by European physicians, who were struck by Swiss mercenaries' failure to thrive in faraway lands. "Nostalgia" meant homesickness. It lingered in medical literature as a psychophysiological complaint as recently as World War II, when the U.S. surgeon general's list of standard maladies included it as a "contagious disorder" that could "spread with the speed of an epidemic" through army induction centers. "Nostalgia" was a label devised by medical elites to characterize provincials' inability to adapt to mobility—whether their uprooting was mandated by the military or by the requirements of a modern, placeless market. Attachment to place, in this view, could easily become pathological.

BY **JACKSON LEARS**



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By midcentury, nostalgia had acquired a more diffuse meaning. The idea that nostalgia was rooted in memories of a particular place did not disappear, but it was subordinated to a broader definition of nostalgia as sentimental reverence for the past. The usage was more polemical than clinical; it carried connotations of political reaction as well as continued hints of pathology. From the viewpoint of American liberal intellectuals, nostalgic people suffered from a failure of nerve: They refused the challenges of modern industrial society, taking refuge in dreams of lost innocence. Richard Hofstadter, Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., and other historians of their generation hammered away at this theme, criticizing the Populist movement of the 1890s for its supposed obeisance to "the agrarian myth" and dismissing conservatism in general as "the politics of nostalgia"—an un-American inability to embrace the faith in a brighter future that was allegedly our nation's birthright.

The problem with nostalgic evocations of the past was not merely their reactionary politics, argued Hofstadter & co.; nostalgia, they believed, substituted feeling for thought, fantasy for fact. "Historical novels, fictionalized biographies, collections of pictures and cartoons, books on American regions and rivers," wrote Hofstadter in 1948, might "satisfy a ravenous appetite for Americana," but they were about as nutritious as a Clark bar; they approached the past "in a spirit of sentimental appreciation rather than of critical analysis." Despite the mediocrity of most of the work Hofstadter described, his mandarin dismissal of popular writing closed off rich veins to historical thought—including, significantly, "books on American regions and rivers," efforts to reconstruct the past of a particular place. Hofstadter and his contemporaries, proud of their participation in a culture of critical discourse, self-consciously cosmopolitan and tough-minded, wanted no part of sentimentality. Nor were they especially interested in evoking a spirit of place—that was a task for provincial antiquarians and popularizers, not professional historians.

Hatred of nostalgia was not simply a liberal reflex. Right wing ideologues used accusations of nostalgia to discredit such critics of capitalism as Vance Packard, who counterposed the quiet pleasures of the New England village to the anxious frenzy of midcentury consumer culture. John Chamberlain, an ex-Stalinist turned free-market ideologue, asserted that Packard should "go back to living in a cave" if he really disliked advertising and status striving so much. Anyone who criticized the corporate-sponsored version of progress should be willing to abandon all modern comforts or else keep silent—a rather arbitrary restriction on public debate.

The epithet "nostalgia" became a rhetorical tic, a way to discredit opponents' views without engaging their substance. It should come as no surprise that in 1965, when Hofstadter found a "paranoid style" of politics lurking in the American countryside, one of its chief symptoms was nostalgia. The shadow of the clinic remained, reinforced by popular psychotherapies that declared attachment to the past "regressive."

But during the late 1960s and early 1970s, nostalgia's stock began to rise—both within the academy and outside it. Affectionate portraits of the past were commercially successful and intellectually respectable. The nostalgia boom of the 1970s, encompassing everything from Civil War chess sets to *Happy Days*, expressed widespread popular yearnings and provoked predictable derision from cheerleading futurists like Alvin Toffler. But this time, left wing intellectuals, including many professional historians, developed their own appreciation for the preindustrial past. E.P. Thompson on the English working class, Lawrence Goodwyn on the Populists, Herbert Gutman on American immigrant labor—these and many other historians explored the ways that traditional, and sometimes even reactionary, cultures (including the antebellum South) could offer provocative alternatives to the progressive vision of industrial capitalism. What had been dismissed as backward customs became legitimate ways of being in the world, roads not taken en route to modernity. In a society where even conservatives were besotted by progress, tradition could develop a critical edge.

As the Hofstadter-Schlesinger generation lost legitimacy and veterans of the antiwar counterculture worked their way through graduate school, preindustrial (or precapitalist) cultures acquired extraordinary fascination and luster. Social and cultural historians introduced a whole new cast of heroic figures: the leather-apron boys, artisans who subordinated entrepreneurship to communal solidarity; traditionalist textile workers keeping St. Monday, which drove their bosses crazy; New England farm women maintaining conjugal mutuality with their husbands, an interdependence their urban granddaughters would seek in vain; orthodox Jewish women using traditional rituals to challenge the big-business beef trust on Manhattan's Lower East Side.

The ferment of social and cultural history served to redefine nostalgia—though the word itself was too tainted for scholars to reclaim overtly. Some of the scholarship was nostalgic in Hofstadter's dismissive sense: Historians sentimentalized "organic communities" they would have found suffocating to inhabit. But what was more interesting about the emerging historical literature was its willingness to take the past on its own terms, to treat preindustrial customs and traditions as legitimate efforts to make sense of experience and not simply as symptoms of ignorance to be steamrollered by the forces of progress. A renewed respect for the pastness of the past (though it sometimes warred with the author's progressive worldview) characterized the best of the early social and cultural history. Despite Hofstadter's worries, the recognition that something of value might have been lost on the way to the present could accompany a profound and nuanced sense of history—more profound and nuanced than the bloodless notion of modernization that

**Books Discussed in This Essay:**

*1939: The Lost World of the Fair*
by David Gelernter
(Avon, 418 pp., $13.50 paper)

*The Lost City: The Forgotten Virtues of Community in America*
by Alan Ehrenhalt
(Basic, 310 pp., $19.50 paper)

*The Repeal of Reticence: A History of America's Cultural and Legal Struggles Over Free Speech, Obscenity, Sexual Liberation, and Modern Art*
by Rochelle Gurstein
(Hill & Wang, 357 pp., $27.50)

*Forbidden Knowledge: From Prometheus to Pornography*
by Roger Shattuck
(Harvest, 369 pp., $14 paper)



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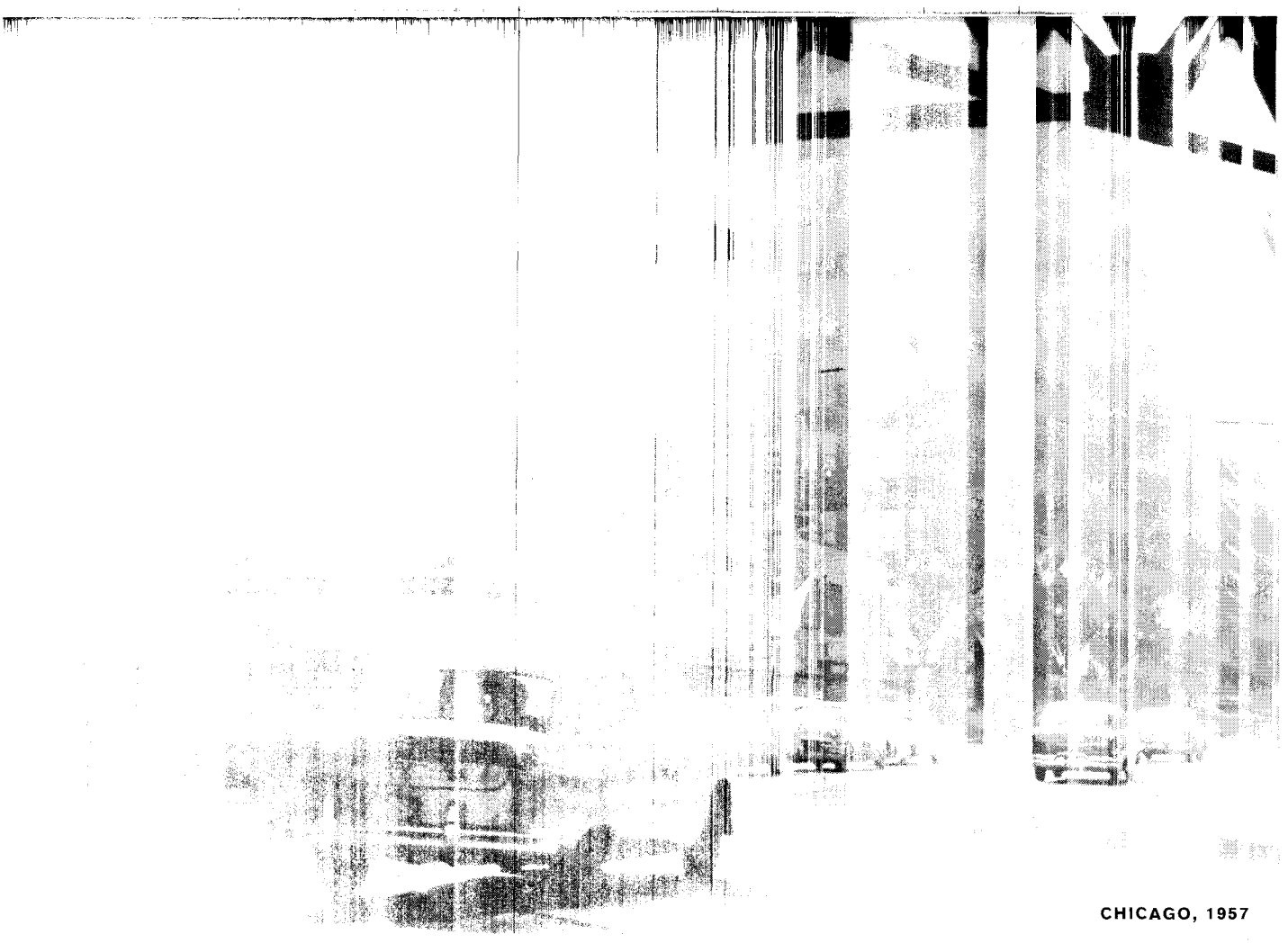

CHICAGO, 1957

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underlay most liberal historiography.

Most pointedly, the search for alternatives to capitalism led many historians to question the reflexive description of preindustrial life as a bog of hopeless poverty. Thompson, Raymond Williams, and others inspired by them found more than "the idiocy of rural life" in the English countryside; they found the sources of political radicalism. Their work showed how loving memories of the past could spark rebellion against the present in the service of future generations. From their British Marxist perspective, the Luddites were no longer quixotic fools; they were heroic defenders of a humane way of life against the capitalist drive for efficiency. American historians of working-class culture celebrated similar struggles.

Modernization, it appeared, was no longer so bland and bloodless; its costs were finally being counted by historians—and others outside the academy. Through the 1970s, a spreading environmental movement promoted popular awareness of the crimes committed in the name of progress. In an era when the religion of economic growth was coming under unprecedented scrutiny, the urge to look backward finally acquired some intellectual legitimacy.

Of course, such recoveries of the past did not go unquestioned. Ronald Reagan's triumphant slogan "America is back!" signaled the return of such "traditional values" as enthusiasm for unregulated economic growth. The rise of the computer industry sparked a resurgent technophilia. Academic fashions reflected this change as well: Timothy Breen and other historians resurrected the "nobody here but us capitalists" model of American social values, implicitly denying the significance of alternative or oppositional cultures outside the liberal individualist tradition. In recent years, the leather-apron boys have been exposed as patriarchal oppressors of women and minorities, the Populists attacked for their xenophobia, the workers' fondness for old ways discounted as a form of nostalgia. Even Christopher Lasch, who had perceptively explored the political potential of attachments to the past, attacked nostalgia in 1991 as "the abdication of memory"—the mirror image of progress in its flatness and vagueness, its sentimental vapidity, its false sense that the past was cut off from the present rather than entwined with it.

THERE IS no doubt that nostalgia can cripple serious thought. But could it ever be an energizing force in intellectual life? Must sentiment and scrupulousness, reverence and reflection, always be opposed? Could there be a version of nostalgia that is informed by critical judgment, honesty to evidence, respect for reasoned argument? A version that even professional historians might be willing to respect?

If so, there could be some valuable



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results. Renewed respect for nostalgia could provide a powerful antidote to linear notions of progress—by underwriting the conviction that once, at least in some ways, life was more humane and satisfying than it is today. Were such a version of nostalgia to acquire intellectual authority, it might challenge the devotees of economic development whose simpleminded vision of progress continues to define public debate, even as many Americans tend increasingly to question the progressive faith.

Several recent works of historical writing and cultural criticism are animated by the impulse to make nostalgia respectable and by a historically informed desire to recover something of value in the past, something missing in the present. For David Gelernter, a prominent Yale computer scientist who was the victim of a Unabomber attack, it is the respect for authority, the willingness to play by the rules, and the feeling of common purpose he believes Americans celebrated at the New York World's Fair of 1939–1940. Alan Ehrenhalt, executive editor of *Governing* magazine, yearns for authority, too, and he finds it in the tight-knit local communities of the 1950s. Both authors admire the belief in progress that (they believe) undergirded Americans' commitment to posterity during the midcentury decades; they are nostalgic for a time when (they assume) people were not nostalgic.

The historian Rochelle Gurstein and the cultural critic Roger Shattuck cast their eye on the aspects of a more distant past: the reticence that characterized Victorian and older cultures, the determination to declare certain realms of experience beyond public discussion or display, the frame of mind long dismissed as puritanical by legions of cultural radicals. Reticence, they argue, is not merely repression; it is a way human cultures map out fundamental categories of meaning. When anything goes in the name of progress and a therapeutic ethic of openness prevails, the specter of meaninglessness—cultural homelessness—looms. Gurstein and Shattuck wish to recover ways of thought that are more distant and more difficult to retrieve than the midcentury cultural consensus; and yet the very audacity of their project makes it an unsettling and valuable one.

"MY MOST important goal is not to make an argument but to lead a tour," David Gelernter announces in his book *1939*. He wants to "make it possible, however dimly, to see the sights, smell the smells, hear the sounds, eavesdrop on the conversations, try on the anxieties and exaltations" of the people who went to the fair, as well as the men who planned, built, and promoted it. As a tour guide, Gelernter is a rousing success. He possesses enough literary grace to present a compelling picture of the fair by combining imagination and historical reconstruction.

The key is his dependence on a fictional informant he calls Hattie Glassman Levine, a woman in her seventies who becomes engaged at the fair to a young architect pseudonymously known as Mark Handler. The story of her courtship with Handler gives the book its narrative drive. Gelernter celebrates the booming, mellifluous voice of authority that dominated the fair—and, he asserts, American society as a whole on the eve of World War II, when people believed in one another and in the broader "civil religion" of the American Way of Life. They also believed in the future, or at least the high-tech version of it offered to them by corporate and government leaders at the fair. They deferred immediate gratification and committed themselves to posterity.

So did the inhabitants of Ehrenhalt's *The Lost City*. Ehrenhalt seeks to re-create three Chicago neighborhoods: the ethnically various but spiritually homogeneous parish of St. Nicholas of Tolentine; the African Americans' decrepit but lively Bronzeville; the spanking-new suburb of Elmhurst. In varying degrees, depending on their disposable cash and skin color, these people were beginning to live in the fair's world of tomorrow. Like other Americans in the 1950s, they delighted in that world. And who can blame them? They were just beginning to feel the jingle of change in their pockets after years of scarcity. They spent money on everything, especially "products with a future"—washing machines, lawn mowers, enormous cars. They had not yet developed a cynical awareness of planned obsolescence; they had little use for Jeremiahs like Vance Packard.

What they did have use for was community. Historians have been skewering the decline-of-community model for decades—usually with accusations of nostalgia—but Ehrenhalt's version is at least empirically convincing. In interviews and quotations, his *dramatis personae* persuade us that, whatever their differences, all three neighborhoods were characterized by an almost obsessive groupiness. Everybody knew everybody else's business. And everybody clung to a common moral code: They believed in sin, and they defined it as disobedience to authority.

Somehow, Gelernter and Ehrenhalt agree, we lost that respect for authority. We allowed the basis of our culture to shift from obligation to desire. We said, in Gelernter's formulation, "why bother?" to the "countless small rituals" that maintained distinctions between public and private, parents and children, gentlemen and louts. We embraced, in Ehrenhalt's version, a new creed of "hyperindividualism," a worship of choice that left us unsatisfied and adrift.

How could this happen? Gelernter and Ehrenhalt have similar answers, both breathtakingly simple, and in moving from anecdote to argument, their books lose considerable force. According to Gelernter, we lost our faith in the American Way of Life because we got what we wanted—the superhighways, the suburbs, the cornucopia of consumer goods, all the features of the future celebrated by the fair—and "there is almost nothing more dispiriting than getting what you have always longed for." There is no future left to envision because the future has already happened, more or less



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according to the planners' schedule. "In 1970 or so we entered the American utopia," Gelernter writes.

Somehow it didn't seem like it at the time—not to those of us who were trying to puzzle out our relationship to a war no one could justify. It does not occur to Gelernter that the American civil religion may have been flawed from the outset, or at best easily misused by public authorities, who in turn brought discredit on authority in general. He forgets the bitterness many people felt on discovering the betrayal of alleged American ideals in the conduct of policy. As that realization spread, many useful and even valuable social rituals became vulnerable too; the countercultural crusade for "authenticity" was none too discriminating in its targets. None of this is in Gelernter: There are only those aimlessly comfortable people in all those tract houses who have arrived in utopia and have no place left to go. The detail of his depiction of the fair disappears in his airbrushed picture of the more recent past.

*The Lost City*'s polemic is equally problematic. Ehrenhalt, who was born in 1947, repeatedly summons the baby boomers to the front of the classroom and raps them on the knuckles for their self-indulgent ways. He argues that they concocted their freedom all by themselves, ignoring its deep roots in liberal and laissez-faire tradition. He attributes neighborhood disintegration to shifting values rather than to changes in urban demography, economic structures, and public policy—the multinationalization of capital, the building of superhighways and suburbs, the blurring of black and white neighborhoods. These changes are too impersonal and complex to make it into Ehrenhalt's argument. So is the impact of the Vietnam War. Instead we get a bizarre tale wherein the baby boomers wake up one morning, listen to Dick Biondi on the radio, and decide they want their own bedrooms. They've had enough of intrusive parents, nosy neighbors, bullying gym teachers, and sadistic priests.

Ehrenhalt is right to believe that hyperindividualism is a corrosive force. Yet our apparently anarchic culture of wants remains interdependently engaged with a culture of obligations. "Ought" has not disappeared from our vocabulary; it has become a managerial rather than a moral imperative. Many Americans remain imprisoned by a puritanical performance ethic, whether it expresses itself in professionalism, personal fitness, or some other perfectionist idiom. A deep strain of moralism distrusts pleasure and wants to police it at every point, for the sake of health if not salvation. Our culture is not a boisterous individualist melee but a balance of tensions between the urge for release and the quest for control, between *Women Who Run With the Wolves* and *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People.*

LIKE Gelernter and Ehrenhalt, Rochelle Gurstein is too quick to find that American culture is a riot of untrammeled pleasure seeking; like them, she is insensitive to the survival of old-fashioned censoriousness in new forms. Still, her book *The Repeal of Reticence* is a persuasive and engaging study of a fundamental cultural shift: a movement in merely a century from a polity where Louis Brandeis could claim that privacy was a precondition for the full flowering of individuality to one where Larry Flynt was celebrated as a hero of free speech. How did we argue ourselves into this mess? Gurstein wonders. How did we come to equate reticence with repression?

An assistant professor of history at the Bard Graduate Center, Gurstein—like Schlesinger and Hofstadter before her—aims to combine historical scholarship with pointed cultural criticism. She relates the republican notion of civic virtue to the ideal of reticence in the nineteenth-century domestic household. By the mid-nineteenth century, the home had become the central source of moral authority amid the centrifugal forces of a market society. A new delicacy regarding bodily functions was more than a matter of maiden-aunt squeamishness. "Because of their inherent fragility and vulnerablity, bodily activities needed to be clothed in moral language that gave them a deeper meaning and content, making them worthy of the new importance attached to the household," Gurstein writes. At about the same time, culture also became a refuge from the unseemly scufflings of everyday life. As numerous debunking historians have shown, this was bourgeois mythology—neither familial nor cultural life could be truly insulated from the larger society—but in Gurstein's view, it was a necessary mythology, a way of maintaining a sacred space amid the relentlessly disenchanting forces of market and modernity.

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In the end, those forces were not to be denied, especially when they deployed the language of democracy and progress. By the late nineteenth century, invasive journalism had begun to violate the sanctuary of the household. The detachment of culture from everyday actualities, meanwhile, had left it seeming sterile and lifeless, vulnerable to a literary countermovement that celebrated the ugly and the raw as the essence of real life.

Journalistic sensationalism and literary realism both invoked a pseudo-populist mandate: "Give the public what it wants." As Gurstein incisively observes: "The trouble with this allegedly democratic standard—which continues to be offered as a justification not only for the most violent and sexually explicit mass entertainment but also for the most vapid—is that it is never clear by what authority producers of such material know what the public wants, and furthermore, why popularity should be *the* determining factor."

The same impoverishment of thought characterized the debate over obscenity law. Anthony Comstock, minister and master of smut-hounds, became a grotesque caricature of the reticent sensibility and a convenient target of enlightened liberals. Comstock's heirs and their critics conducted a debate over obscenity that narrowed the rationale for reticence from protecting the quality of public life to preserving the sanctity of private morals. The adversarial proceedings of the law combined with liberal traditions to promote a search for individual victims. When they could not be found (or when charges of victimization could not be convincingly sustained), titillating trash began to be defined as free speech. *Hard Copy* was waiting in the wings.

As disturbing as the devaluation of public discourse, to Gurstein, was the disenchantment of intimate life. By the 1920s, some of the staunchest critics of Comstockery had begun to glimpse an emptiness at the heart of sexual liberation. Without an element of mystery, H.L. Mencken asserted, sex was mere mechanics; the enlighteners' penchant for demystification threatened to create a world where there would be "no more poets and painters, but only dermatologists and photographers." (Are we there yet?) The emerging performance ethos created new forms of anxiety. As Gurstein writes, the idea "that one's intimate life may be regarded as a success or failure eventually led to endless public discussion and analysis, overburdening this most fragile and private of experiences with expectations that are difficult if not impossible to satisfy." Emancipated moderns, having invested heavily in sex as a source of identity, were terrified when it became standardized, commodified, and ubiquitous.

Or were they so terrified? It is safe to say that many Americans have continued to find pleasure and meaning in sex—an affirmation, maybe, of two people's love for each other and not merely a mechanical exercise. Like her mentor Christopher Lasch, Gurstein presents a hopeless picture of contemporary American culture. The assault on repression and hypocrisy has left us nothing to believe in and nowhere to hide. It is always possible to undermine such sweeping claims with counterexamples.

Intent on defending reticence, Gurstein overlooks the feminist critique of it. If there is a powerful moral challenge to the "party of reticence," it comes from this direction. Since the days of Margaret Sanger, feminists have charged that reticence about sex was a hypocritical social convention: It allowed men to do pretty much as they wished while refusing such freedom to women. Gurstein never asks the fundamental question: Why were the reformers so eager to expose the dark places in the Victorian soul? Their determination stemmed from ideology, to be sure, but also from their own frustrated experience. One does not need to be an ideologue to acknowledge that here, the personal really was political.

STILL, Gurstein makes a strong case that reticence is a value well worth recovering—though one hopes it can be distinguished from the injustice that so often accompanied it in the Victorian age. An even stronger case for reticence is advanced by Roger Shattuck in *Forbidden Knowledge*. Like Gurstein, Shattuck believes that the survival of cultural meaning depends on the maintenance of limits and that the incandescent success of the Enlightenment's creed of progress has blinded us to this need. As he writes: "Having lived through the Enlightenment and subsequent revolu-



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tions, the West appears to consider itself capable of surviving in a condition of unrestricted knowledge and unbridled imagination. We presume to welcome Prometheus while overlooking Pandora; we do not shrink from looking upon the face of God." In science as well as art, any brakes on experiment are viewed as fundamental threats to freedom. From the rise of genetic engineering to the academic rehabilitation of the Marquis de Sade, we celebrate the advance of curiosity and the smashing of old taboos.

Elegantly and at length, Shattuck questions this refusal of limits, deploying an extraordinary range of literary (and a few scientific) examples. He does not locate the idea of forbidden knowledge in a Golden Age, after which decline occurred; he is not nostalgic for a particular time or place. But he does try to reconstruct a buried tradition, stretching from Dante and Pascal to Emily Dickinson and Claude Lévi-Strauss—a tradition that acknowledges the value of constraints on the relentless pursuit of knowledge and experience. At the heart of that tradition is a paradoxical frame of mind, what the theologian Nicholas of Cusa called "wise ignorance" and the biologist T.H. Huxley, "agnosticism"—a willingness to acknowledge, as Shattuck writes, that "What we know informs us increasingly about what we do not know." We may never know the answers to ultimate questions about the universe, nor even whether the ones we are asking are the right ones. "The fact that we remain ignorant of how to pose the final questions (even if we have a history of powerful answers to them) should encourage in us an attitude of reverence and wonder toward the world," Shattuck justly observes. "That fundamental ignorance in the face of our flourishing knowledge provides the moral basis for moving slowly in the darkness and for resisting both the pull of reductionism and the lure of grand theory."

Shattuck uses the idea of forbidden knowledge to illuminate the destructive underside of the Enlightenment project, and to encourage the "reverence and wonder" that demystification destroys. His strategy may be the most intellectually fruitful form of nostalgia. Rather than mourn the passing of a particular time and place, he carefully counterposes past ways of thinking to those of the present.


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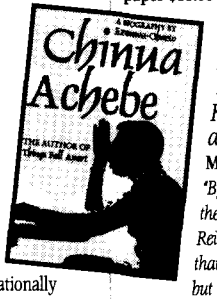


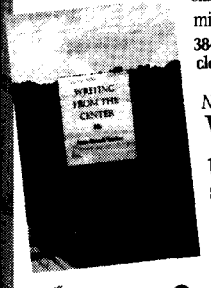

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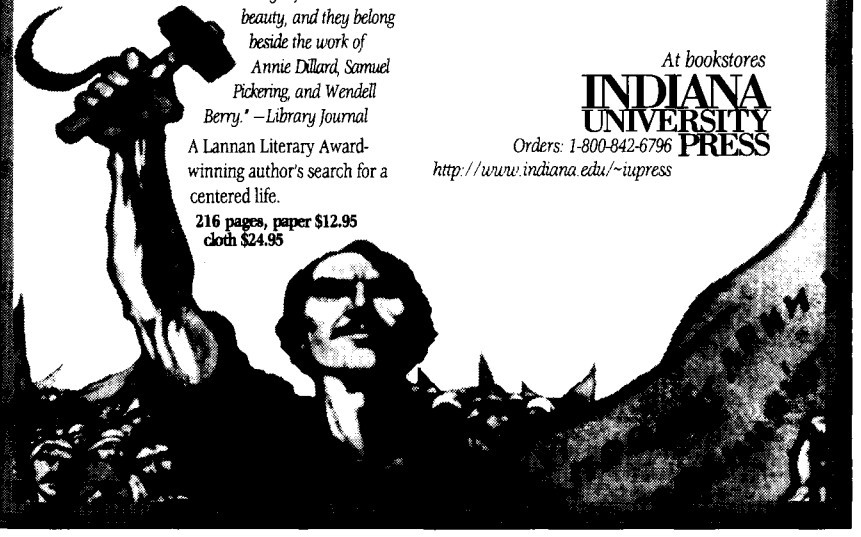

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THE PATTERN of decline from wholeness to fragmentation is as old as the Puritan jeremiad. In this rhetorical strategy, the past becomes a means of reaffirming familiar commitments to the present and future. The loose ends of social conflict are cut off, the messiness of history smoothed away. Nostalgia is pressed into the service of established moral conventions. Gelernter's *1939* and Ehrenhalt's *Lost City* approximate this formula. Despite their fascination with the past for its own sake, they soon begin to sound like neoconservative harangues. Gurstein's book, for all its subtlety, sometimes echoes that rhetoric as well. Only Shattuck transcends it.

STILL FROM THE FILM *NOSTALGIA*

Yet all of these books raise an important issue. Confronted by the tyranny of therapeutic openness, or by the specter of genetic engineering, or indeed by any other example of potentially destructive enlightenment, we have a right to ask: "Is this what we want?" The question is not a prelude to censorship; both Gurstein and Shattuck, for example, shy away from draconian measures. Rather, their skepticism is an antidote to the onward-and-upward orthodoxy embedded in most forms of cultural debate. Nostalgia, from this perspective, can restore will and choice to a discourse dominated by the jargon of inevitability. The sense that something of value might have passed from the scene could reveal a more genuinely historical frame of mind than the assumption that change is always irreversible and generally beneficent.

THERE has no doubt been a host of reasons historians have taken up their craft, from idle curiosity to a desire to set the record straight. In some cases, nostalgic fascination with the past has been one of them too. My brother and I, on a tramp in the woods near our house in Maryland, once discovered a rusting blue roadster, nowhere near a road, completely entangled in honeysuckle vines. We saw it as a mysterious relic of the F. Scott Fitzgerald era, the sort of car Nick Carraway might have driven to one of Gatsby's parties. "I wonder what parties were like in the time of the blue car" became our mock-serious statement for opening any speculation about our family past. It also expressed what may have been my original impulse to study history (an impulse that was later complicated by political and intellectual concerns). To recover the look and feel of the past, to experience what it was really like—the task is impossible but endlessly tantalizing and at least as vital to the writing of history as the desire to settle some historiographical debate. Yet among professionals, any nostalgic motives involved in reconstructing the past have to be concealed, else the work will reek of antiquarianism or, worse, sentimentality.

The professionals are mistaken, for it is ultimately impossible to resist the pull of the past, especially in a culture as enraptured by the future as our own. "So we beat on, boats against the current, borne back ceaselessly into the past," wrote Fitzgerald at the conclusion of *The Great Gatsby*—the story of a self-made man, committed to the present and future, done in by his unfulfilled longings for a past that never existed. The effort to sail without ballast into the future becomes too much for even the most forward-looking entrepreneur. The past preserves its fascination. There will always be people who wonder what life was like in the time of the blue car.

That is why we need to take nostalgia seriously as an energizing impulse, maybe even a form of knowledge. The effort to revalue what has been lost can motivate serious historical inquiry; it can also cast a powerful light on the present. Visions of the good society can come from recollections and reconstructions of the past, not only from fantasies of the future. Maybe it's time to use nostalgia as something more than a mere pejorative.

**Jackson Lears teaches history at Rutgers University. He is the author most recently of *Fables of Abundance: A Cultural History of Advertising in America* (Basic) and is at work on a book about grace, luck, and fortune in American cultural history.**



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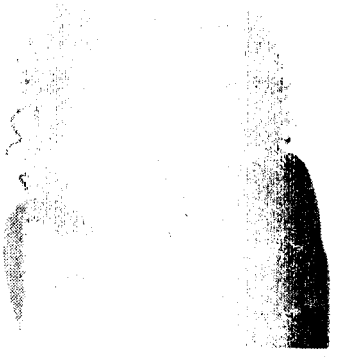

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**continued from page 7**

and hope against hope that for once somebody besides Random House and Norton and the Joyce estate will finally laugh. In the meantime, we can be thankful that the archaeological erudition of such scholars as Kidd & Company generally keeps them away from such gatherings because, dammit, you can't take these people anywhere.

**CRAIG OWENS**
**BLOOMINGTON, IN**

Although we take issue with John Dorfman's conclusions regarding the alleged demise of folklore ["That's All, Folks!" October], his point that folklorists have failed to take the initiative in clarifying the subject matter and methods of their discipline is well taken. We welcome this opportunity to elucidate.

A good place to start might be by asking why graduate students continue to devote their professional careers to a field so poorly understood, and hence so easily maligned. Surely we could instead be attending Ph.D. programs in anthropology, literary studies, dance, sociology, linguistics, musicology, psychology, history, art and architecture, semiotics, popular culture, or cultural studies. However, we understand that the value of folklore is precisely that it incorporates the wisdom of *all* these and other disciplines—wisdom folklorists enrich with their unique focus on human traditions. Folklore explores cultural and artistic continuity across time and place, an enterprise for which other branches of the humanities and social sciences have historically demonstrated little interest or imagination.

Given that the overwhelming majority of the cultural and cognitive products of the world's peoples remains beyond the reach of canonical history, we feel that the eclectic study of social and cultural lore is uniquely equipped to reveal the rich tapestry of human experience. Many of us also consider it our responsibility to recognize and contextualize postindustrial cultures as contributing not the only, or even the most significant, but some colorful threads to the ongoing construction of the traditional, continuous story of what it means to be human. We recognize that we cannot afford to view these goals as mutually exclusive.

**LIZ LOCKE, INDIANA UNIVERSITY**
**(AND EIGHTY OTHER GRADUATE STUDENT SIGNATORIES)**

Thanks to Dorfman for his informative and instructive article. He describes the folklore crisis accurately and without bias. The situation at Penn is worrisome, and the absorption of the UCLA department also raises questions.

I'd add that "World Arts and Culture" may be a more precise summation of what we study than "folklore." As a Judaic folklorist, I will most likely never work in a Jewish studies department (where I am probably needed most),



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because my diploma reads "Folklore." If it said "Judaic Arts and Culture," I have no doubt it would inspire more positive associations among Jewish studies faculty. Given the state of the folklore market, my professional options lie almost entirely in other disciplines where folkloristic theories and fieldwork techniques are appreciated.

**JUDITH S. NEULANDER**
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There isn't a folklorist working today who would equate vernacular culture, as Dorfman does, with the qualities of locality and orality. Nor are folklorists who "co-opt" contemporary theory acting out of desperation. Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, Amy Shuman, and other folklorists cited by Dorfman have made meaningful connections between folklore and contemporary theory. They are studying a variety of cultural productions that would never fall under the very constrained and passé notion of folklore that Dorfman uses as the premise for his premature eulogy.

In his failure to listen closely to what his "informants" were telling him, Dorfman has committed the most grievous methodological error in fieldwork, one that we warn our beginning students about as they start their research: He draws conclusions about a group (in this case, an entire discipline) without understanding the context in which the information is provided.

*Lingua Franca* is complicit in this reductive misrepresentation of folklorists: Although Dorfman rightly suggests that folklorists suffer from an image problem, since "the term 'folklore' connotes things like fiddles and quilts," what image was chosen to accompany his article? Why, a photo of a quilt, of course. Is it any wonder folklorists can't get any respect?

**ROSEMARY V. HATHAWAY**
**DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH**
**UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN COLORADO**

## [illegible]

At the risk of being pedantic, I'll point out that, intentionally or otherwise, Flaubert was transforming the color of Emma Bovary's irises, not her pupils [Inside Publishing, October]. Or are we being invited to examine Daniel Zalewski's article in the same way that Sutherland examines nineteenth-century fiction?

**EMILY RAPHAEL**
**COHOES, NY**

## [illegible]

Due to a printer's error, a line was dropped from November's "Breakthrough Books." The first line of Walter LaFeber's contribution should have read, "The Cold War has been overanalyzed from a Soviet-U.S. perspective."

In "The Corrections Officer" [October], *Lingua Franca* misidentified the Dublin psychiatrist who appears in *Ulysses*. His name is Conolly Norman.

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# WEBS OF DISCOURSE

[illegible] the thirty-first annual Comparative [illegible] course: **The Intertextuality of Science Studies.**" Plenary speakers are Donna Haraway, Lynn Randolph, Marcos Novak, and Carl Rubino. Confirmed participants include **Ingrid Bartsch, Jay** David Bolter, Jamie Brassett, James Bono, **Anne Collins, Hugh Crawford,** Carolyn DiPalma, Elana Gomel, Richard Grusin, **Cyndy Hendershot, Linda** D. Henderson, Greg Little, Steven Meyer, **Jeffrey Oxford, James Paxson,** Marjean Purinton, Martin Rosenberg, **William Thornton, Laura Sells, and** Edvie Sobstyl. The full program plus information on registration and accommodations is available at <http://www.english.ttu.edu/wod>. **Symposium** director: Bruce Clarke, <bruno@ttu.edu>, **Department of English, Texas** Tech University, Lubbock, TX 79409-3091.

**Lubbock, TX; February 5-7, 1998**

# NEAR MISSES, CONTINGENCIES, HISTORIES

Announcing the Sixth Annual Indiana University Conference in the Humanities, "Before We Revise, Where Are We? Near Misses, Contingencies, and Disciplinary Histories." The keynote speaker will be William Ian Miller, author of *The Anatomy of Disgust*, *Humiliation*, and *Bloodtaking and Peacemaking*. We are currently soliciting scholarship that explores the history and genealogy of particular methods and theories (including theorists), that explores traditional modes of reading, or historicizes the explication of particular texts. Papers of a more whimsical bent that refuse the constraints of standard critical approaches are also welcome, as are works that trace how late-breaking discoveries of long-lost items already challenge those approaches. Two 300-word abstracts and cover letter due January 15, 1998. Direct inquiries to Chris Hokanson <chokanso@indiana.edu> and/or Sheila McDermott <smmcderm@indiana.edu>. Snail-mail: IU Conference in the Humanities, English Department, Ballantine 442, Indiana University, Bloomington, IN 47405.

**Bloomington, IN; March 6-8, 1998**

# NARRATIVE

"Narrative: An International Conference" is an annual event sponsored by the Society for the Study of Narrative Literature, an interdisciplinary group devoted to the study of narrative theory and practice across a broad range of genres, media, and fields. This year's conference will take place on the Northwestern University campus, and will include 250-300 papers in panel format, as well as plenary presentations by Mikkel Borch-Jacobsen (Psychoanalysis and Philosophy, University of Washington), Carol Clover (Rhetoric/Film/Slavics, UC-Berkeley), Assia Djebar (film-maker/novelist/Francophone studies, LSU), Michael Rogin (Political Science, UC-Berkeley), and Valerie Smith (English/African-American studies, UCLA). For further information on the program, registration, and accommodation, please consult our Web site: <http://www.narrative.nwu/edu/>.

**Evanston, IL; April 2-5, 1998**

# QUEER GLOBALIZATION/ LOCAL HOMOSEXUALITIES

"Queer Globalization/Local Homosexualities: Citizenship, Sexuality, and the Afterlife of Colonialism," a three-day exploration of how queer studies and colonial/postcolonial studies converge and diverge in the age of globalization, will take place at the Graduate School and University Center of the City University of New York. Confirmed plenary speakers include: Norma Alarcón, Jacqui Alexander, K. Anthony Appiah, Kobena Mercer, Michael Moon, Cindy Patton, Silviano Santiago, Gayatri Spivak, and Wesley Thomas. For registration information, contact the Center for Lesbian and Gay Studies, 33 West 42nd Street, Room 404N, New York, NY 10036; phone 212-642-2924; e-mail <clags@broadway.gc.cuny.edu>. This conference is funded through the Rockefeller Residency Fellowships in the Humanities Program.

**New York, NY; April 23-25, 1998**

# THE POST/ DISCIPLINARY UNIVERSITY

The Centre for Interdisciplinary Research in the Liberal Arts (CIRLA) will host a conference which will investigate the nature and future of disciplines. What are the strengths and limits of disciplinary knowledge, and what options are open to the university? How can the university fill the needs of its various communities, while staying true to its identity? Topics to be addressed include: "The public intellectual: Romantic ideal, necessary evil, or...?"; "Is there anything beyond the discipline? beyond the 'inter-discipline'?"; "Colonization: Disciplines in relation to non-Western forms of knowledge"; "What kind of students do disciplines produce?" For a full list of topics, see the WWW site below. For further information, or to submit a paper or session proposal, contact Bruce Janz, CIRLA, Augustana University College, 4901-46 Avenue, Camrose, AB, Canada, T4V 2R3; or call 403-679-1130; fax 403-679-1161; e-mail <cirla@augustana.ab.ca>; Web site: <http://www.augustana.ab.ca/cirla>.

**Banff, Alberta, Canada; May 7-10, 1998**

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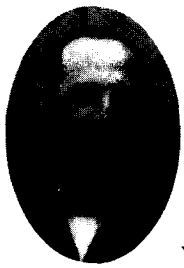
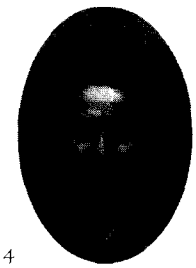


## Sister Brother

Gertrude and Leo Stein

*Brenda Wineapple*



"They were a couple, Leo and Gertrude. They lived together in Cambridge, Baltimore, Florence, and Paris. When they broke up in 1914 after forty years, it was as acrimonious as the ugliest divorce, a reminder that siblings, like lovers, have also hated each other for millennia."—*The Nation*

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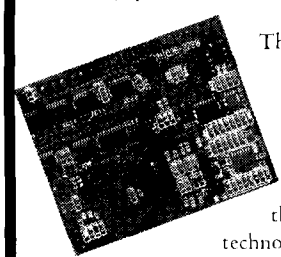

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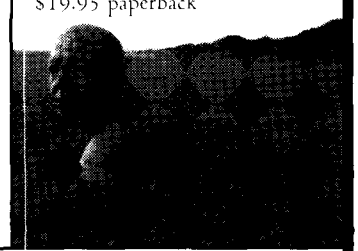

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# Hypotheses

## MOTION SICKNESS

### A random walk from Paris to Wall Street

SCIENTISTS OF THE SO-CALLED reductionist school believe in the explanatory power of hard science. Everything, they argue, from sociology and psychology to biology and chemistry can be understood in terms of elementary-particle physics, the rock-bottom guide to reality. Antireductionists (who sometimes like being called holists) deny this, claiming that all sciences are autonomous and equal. Then there are the radical social constructionists, who stand conventional reductionism on its head by insisting that elementary-particle physics can be reduced to sociology. I used to think they were crazy, but now I'm not so sure.

It turns out that a certain theory long credited to Albert Einstein was actually thought up by a fellow trying to make sense of a rather peculiar social phenomenon of the kind best observed on Wall Street. Despite its social-scientific origins, this theory can explain why elementary particles behave in the unfathomable way they do.

The story starts with a botanist. In 1827 an Englishman named Robert Brown was looking through his microscope at some pollen granules suspended in water. He noticed that they were behaving in an odd manner. They seemed to be doing a sort of drunken dance, moving this way and that without pause or logic. He then observed that soot particles taken from the smoggy London air and put into water acted the same way, as did microscopic particles chipped off the Sphinx. In 1828 he published a pamphlet describing the mysterious phenomenon, which subsequently became known as Brownian motion.

Skip ahead to 1905. That was the year Einstein, seeking to demonstrate the existence of atoms, came up with an elegant argument based on Brownian motion. Those tiny particles that appeared to be rambling aimlessly about, Einstein submitted, were actually getting shoved around by the surrounding water molecules. From his calculations, he derived the square-root law, which says that the average distance traveled by a particle in Brownian motion is proportional to the square root of the time it has been traveling. (Thus, a drunkard wandering at random on Manhattan's street grid could expect to get as far from his starting point in one hundred minutes as a sober person heading straight down an avenue at the same pace would in ten.)

Einstein explained Brownian motion the same year he described the photoelectric effect and proposed the theory of special relativity. The discovery of the square-root law, write Michael White and John Gribbin in *Einstein: A Life in Science* (1994), was "completely novel."

This, as it turns out, is completely false. The theory of Brownian motion—and the square-root law in particular—had been worked out five years earlier by a young French doctoral candidate in mathematics named Louis Bachelier. He, too, was trying to explain certain puzzling movements: not of pollen granules suspended in water but of stock and bond prices on the Paris Bourse. In Bachelier's theory of speculation, bits of breaking news played the role that molecular collisions would play for Einstein. Bombarded by the unpredictable arrival of such information, stock prices meander in a way that is impossible to foretell. In today's parlance, they take a random walk.

Bachelier dutifully turned in his dissertation on the topic, received a respectable but not superlative *mention honorable*, and died in provincial obscurity, in 1946. Not long thereafter, however, MIT economist Paul Samuelson and a couple of colleagues stumbled upon Bachelier's thesis, a copy of which had been collecting dust in the school's library. "Bachelier seems to have had something of a one-track mind," Samuelson later wrote. "But what a track!" By the 1960s, a group of professors at MIT, Chicago, and Stanford had elaborated the Frenchman's insights into the notorious efficient-market theory. Thanks to the frenzied activity of competing traders, the theory held, share prices adjust instantly to reflect all available information. Thus tomorrow's performance cannot be determined by anything that is known today.

Wall Streeters hated this new product of the ivory tower. If beating the market was purely a matter of luck, then their vaunted stock-picking skills were worthless. Empirically, however, the efficient-market theory seemed invincible. The history of market fluctuations fit the square-root law to a T. As far as Samuelson was concerned, this was "the best confirmed theory in the social sciences."

For the last act, the scene switches back to physics. Around the same time that Bachelier was being rediscovered by social scientists, a Princeton mathematician named Edward Nelson was trying a little experiment with the theory of Brownian motion. What, he wondered, do you get if you apply its restless logic to classical Newtonian physics? In 1966, he unveiled his astounding answer: *You get quantum mechanics.*

It's true. If, as Nelson supposed, elementary particles are subjected to a relentless but statistically random jiggling, they end up displaying all the characteristic forms of quantum strangeness. The classical concept of velocity, for example, disappears when the path taken by an electron is infinitely crinkly. Nelson's students were able to extend Brownian reasoning to cover such phenomena as the electron's spin.

Here, then, is the correct chronology. A theory is proposed to explain a mysterious social institution (the Paris Bourse). It is then used to resolve a mid-level mystery in physics (Brownian motion). Finally, it clears up an even deeper mystery in physics (quantum behavior). The implication is plain: Market weirdness explains quantum weirdness, not the other way around.

Think of it this way: If Isaac Newton had worked at Goldman Sachs instead of sitting under an apple tree, he would have discovered the Heisenberg uncertainty principle.

**JIM HOLT**



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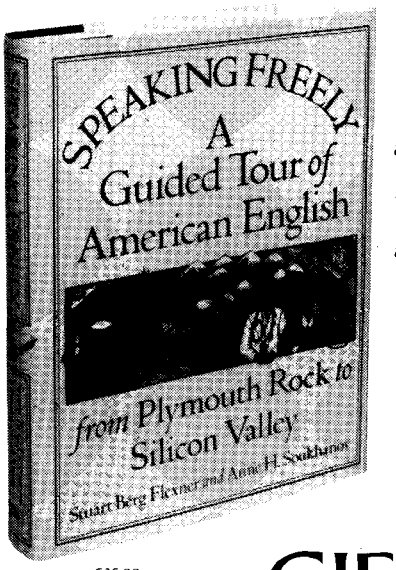
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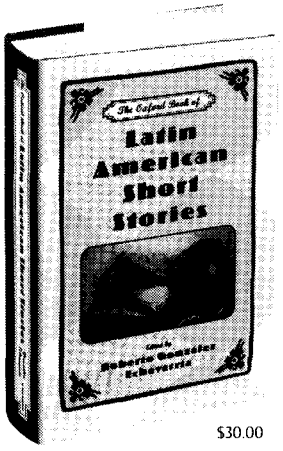


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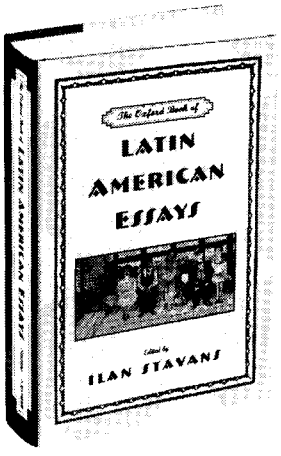


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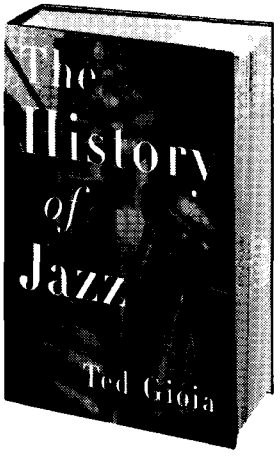


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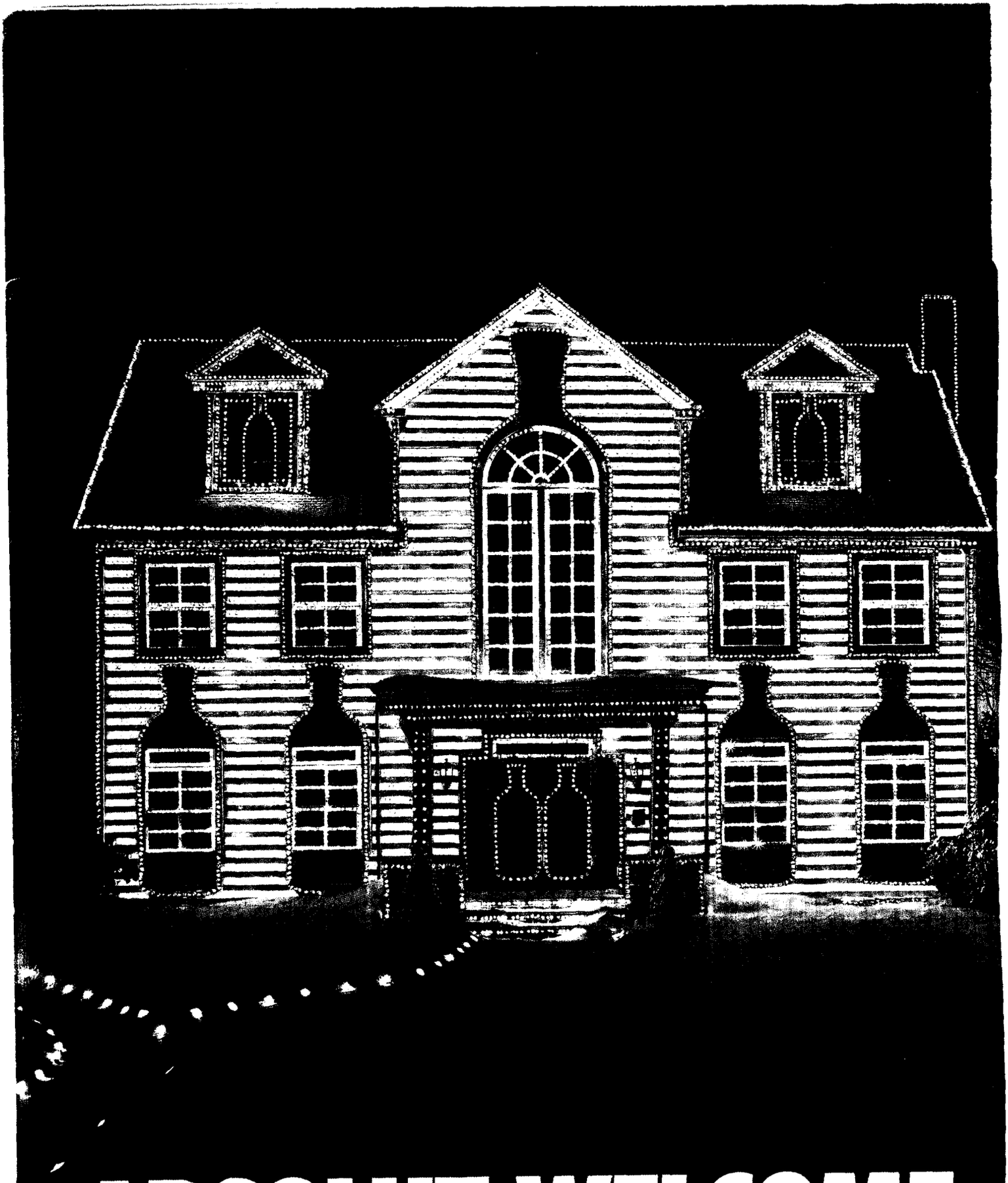

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